THE EFFECTS OF PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY ON THE CHINESE CULT OF ANCESTORS AS PRACTISED IN THE JOHANNESBURG AREA

by

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The candidate affirms that this is his own work both in conception and execution.

Promoter : **Professor C J A Greyling**

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DEDICATION

I DEDICATE THIS THESIS TO MY WIFE CONSTANCE

IN APPRECIATION FOR HER UNFAILING LOVE,
HER CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT AND HER PERSONAL
SACRIFICES OVER THE PAST TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS.

MY CHILDREN ALSO DESERVE SPECIAL MENTION

FOR THEIR LOVING SUPPORT, PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING
DURING THE YEARS THAT I SPENT ON THIS THESIS.
THANK YOU HEATHER, PAUL AND JANICE.

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SUMMARY

Traditional Chinese religion involves the belief in a large number of good and evil spirit beings who are arranged in a strict hierarchical order. The spirit world is a mirrored existence of the world of the living and the hierarchical order is a copy of that which was observed during the Han dynasty. Even the spirit beings are portrayed in the clothing styles of that period. The Chinese tend to be eclectic and syncretistic in their religion. Their approach to the adoption of a set of beliefs may be described as supermarket shopping for religious ideas. The historical development of Buddhism, religious Taoism as well as certain of the new religious movements in Taiwan show ample evidence of attempts to syncretise rites and beliefs.

The development of filial piety since the earliest period of China's history gave rise to the formalisation of behaviour towards parents and the earlier ancestors. Certain behavioural patterns became entrenched as rites which were observed even after the death of the parents. The educated class of traditional China saw the observance of such post-funerary rites as culturally educative exercises to instill family loyalty and reverence for the dead. Such rites were also used as opportunities for the bereaved to deal with their grief in a ceremonious manner. The less educated were more prone to practise such rites as the worship of the ancestors. Filial piety served as the vehicle of ancestor veneration and in the more extreme cases, ancestor worship.

The study provides a number of insights related to the different attitudes of Chinese Protestants towards the cult of the ancestors which were previously not available. A reasonably strong fundamentalist attitude exists in the

Protestant community which decries any ritualistic association with the ancestral cult. A large number of Protestants draw a distinction between the cultural and the religious aspects of the ancestral cult. The reverence shown to the ancestors is seen as cultural and therefore acceptable as long as reverence is interpreted as the showing of a deep respect for the dead.

The churches do not show a deep understanding of the role which the cult plays in the culture of the community. The practice of filial piety continues to be observed in tandem with the parallel Biblical teachings. However, the role of filial piety as the vehicle of ancestor veneration has not been fully grasped by the majority of church leaders and even less by the members and adherents. Certain of the churches embarked on a low profile programme to combat ancestor veneration rites especially among the senior citizens in their congregations.

The attendance at the two major cultic festivals by Christians is no longer seen as attendance or participation in a religious rite. Such visits to the graves of relatives and friends are considered as cultural and social activities completely devoid of religious implications.

The researcher found that because confusion exists in the use of certain religious terms, a corresponding confusion exists in the practice of the ancestor cult by some Chinese. On the whole, the study revealed a relatively well-informed community even amongst the younger people who were locally raised and educated when certain rites such as the 'Inviting home' ceremony was mentioned.

The cult of the ancestors in Johannesburg shows a traditional

persistence in spite of the Protestant influences in Johannesburg. In certain instances it appears that the cult is gaining a new momentum, especially with the influx of a few thousand Taiwanese Chinese into Johannesburg and its environs.

Many of the new immigrants continue to observe the traditional funerary rites.

The sympathetic attitude of the Roman Catholic church towards the veneration of Confucius and the ancestors may in fact encourage the continued observance of the cultic rites.

The Chinese Protestants continue to be faced with religious and cultural issues in terms of continuity and discontinuity. The churches and their members need to consider these issues with greater intensity and urgency. Guidelines are needed for the new generation of Chinese Protestants to the age-old question: what must a Christian surrender of his culture for the sake of his faith?

ABBREVIATIONS

Christian Care for Elderly Chinese CCEC

Church Minute Book of Southdale Baptist Church CMB
The church was initially called the Chinese Christian Church and in later years, the Chinese Baptist Church.

Council (The) of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance CCCR

Dictionary of Comparative Religion DOCR

Echoes of Service EOS

Good News Bible GNB

King James Version KJV

Living (The) Bible TLB

Major Questionnaires referred to as RECORDS

Macmillan Encyclopedia ME

New Encyclopaedia Britannica Micropaedia NEBM

New Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology NLEOM

New (The) Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary NWED

Question/s in Major Questionnaire referred to as Q/QQ.

Reader's Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary RDGED

Standard Encyclopaedia of South Africa SEOSA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 DEFINITION OF SOME KEY TERMS

Particular terms and phrases evolve new nuances of meaning over a period of time and misinterpretation can affect their use in specific contexts. For these reasons the present writer thought it expedient to record at the outset of this study a few of the most basic terms and the definitions according to which they will be used.

1.1.1 An ethnic delimitation

The term 'Chinese cult of the ancestors' will delimit the study of the cult of the ancestors as practised by the Chinese people. References will however be made to similar concepts and practices found in other cultures.

1.1.2 Use of the word 'cult'

The word 'cult' is not used in a derogatory or disparaging sense. The word is commonly defined as 'a system of religious belief and worship' (NWED 1980:209). It is also defined as 'devotion, homage to person or thing' (RDGED 1962;1:221). It is somewhere in-between these two definitions that the writer wishes to place the term 'cult' as there have been and still are many Chinese who 'worship' their ancestors while there are many others who only show devotion and homage to their forebears.

1.1.3 Preference for the term 'veneration'

The key phrase 'cult of the ancestors' is therefore a contentious one. Although writers on Chinese religious practices do not

favour the phrase 'religion of the ancestors' the majority nevertheless use the term 'worship' in conjunction with the ancestors (e g Bodde 1965:21-22, de Groot 1972;1:1, Cheng 1973:52, Tan 1979:1, Bloomfield 1983:81, Ro 1985:preface).

The present writer will use the more neutral term 'ancestor veneration' which is broader in its application and less susceptible to partisan criticism. The term 'ancestor veneration' will encompass the attitudes, beliefs and practices of rites which may indicate admiration, respect, and honour, but not deification by the descendants.

1.1.4 A broad description

The term 'cult of the ancestors' will be used in this study to refer to all the rites and practices which follow on the death of the ancestor and the subsequent rites which families undertake whereby devotion is shown to the deceased ancestors. In other words, a broad description of the beliefs and practices related to the ancestors will be followed in this study.

1.2 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

In order that the focus on the topic for research may be more clearly demarcated, the writer offers the following brief description of the cult of the ancestors. The general description will incorporate some traditional perspectives which are no longer practised in Johannesburg but which are still observed in the Far East.

1.2.1 The nature of the ancestor cult

1.2.1.1 Its origin

Men of virtue were 'honoured and worshipped' during the legendary period at the grand ancestral worship which was performed every

five years. It was only after the Hsia dynasty (c.2205-1766 BC) that the ancestors of the emperors were 'worshipped in a chronological order'. It was during the Hsia dynasty that the worship of blood-related ancestors started but from the period of the Chou dynasty (c.1122-221 BC) ancestor worship became almost as important as the worship of Heaven. The idea that things originate from Heaven, but people originate from their ancestors, has given the Chinese a desire 'to show appreciation for the life and example given to them' by their ancestors (Wei 1985:122).

According to Wei's theory of the origin of the ancestral cult it appears that the practice of honouring and 'worshipping' men of virtue developed into a fully-fledged ancestral cult. This practice also prepared the Chinese mindset over the centuries to incorporate men such as Lao Tzu and Confucius into their cultic veneration rites. The basis for such rites of honour and veneration was appreciation for the examples provided by them.

1.2.1.2 The spiritual dimension of the cult

Soothill (1923:181) described the cult of the ancestors as the essential religion of China, and it may be claimed as 'the earliest form if not of religion, at least of spiritual development'. He further saw the root of the ancestral cult as 'sunk deep down in the national soul and stretch away back, ...to the death of the first Chinese parent'.

The ancestral cult constitutes an important part of the popular Chinese religion in conjunction with an ancient nature worship. This popular religion also borrowed from Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. From Confucianism it borrowed ethics; from Buddhism the belief in transmigration and concern for the after life. The Taoist pantheon provided the popular religion with its supreme deity and a host of deified saints and heroes (DOCR 1970:189).

1.2.2 The purpose of the ancestral cult

1.2.2.1 To foster refinement and moral training

The development of the ancestral cult is dependent on the promotion of Confucian teachings on filial piety in this life and the continuation of the father-son relationship beyond the grave. Filial piety is used as the moral training ground for the continuous raising of new generations of young people who learn to be filial to their own fathers in order to be of service to others. Cheng (1973:52) noted that 'ancestral worship' is not due to superstition or meant to immortalize the ancestors. Having an affectionate regard even for the dead will help men understand the duty of having an affectionate regard for the living. Filiality is taught in order to foster refinements of human relations (DOCR 1970:652).

1.2.2.2 To unite the living and the dead

The Chinese society is based on the nuclear family and the sorrow and resultant problems which accompany the death of the head of the family is ameliorated to a degree in the belief that the deceased continues to form part of the family, but as a spirit being. In his new state, the deceased has certain spirit powers which may be used to the advantage of his family and conversely, he also possesses powers to withhold his help.

To the traditionally-minded Chinese person it seems quite natural that the reverence and honour to which he was accustomed as a father in his home should be continued after his death.
A clear reference to this traditional behaviour was well known even prior to the time of Confucius as evidenced in the following comment in the I-Li (Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial), a work which has been traditionally dated to the twelfth century BC (Steele 1966;1:xii).

> ...civilized people who live within the bounds

> of settled government are familiar with the custom of paying reverence to the dead father. Officials and scholarly men carry this reverence to the deceased grandfather. The feudal lords extend it a step farther and pay reverence to the ancestor who first held this office in their line. The Son of Heaven extends this reverence to the original mythical ancestor, from whom his line derives... The great head of the family controls all who are of honour in the family; and moreover, it is he who binds the different branches into one corporate entity....
>
> (Steele 1966;2:19)

The quotation from the I-Li mentions in the last sentence that 'the great head of the family controls... and binds the different branches into one...'. It is to this aspect that we next turn our attention.

1.2.3 The observance of the ancestral cult

The family-orientated structure of Chinese society is also reflected in the observance of the ancestral cult. The above quotation from the I-Li reflects the historical belief that a close affinity continues to pervade the relationship between the living and the deceased, especially between the head or progenitor of the family and his offsprings.

1.2.3.1 The ancestors likened to a corporation

L E Stover (1974:206-207) portrays the great family as a kind of 'business corporation'. The ranks upon ranks of spirit tablets in the ancestral hall represents a visible display of the corporation's 'executives and controllers and ordinaries, high and low'. The display of honours, plaques, degrees, public

honours and citations received from the government by family members attest to their status and achievements.

The death of the family's 'chairman of the board' and the subsequent pageantry of the funeral procession, followed by the usual generous mourning feast, not only demonstrate the family's wealth and status, but also serve as means of unifying the family. The rites of 'ancestor worship' may therefore be said to mobilize the family members around a common centre.

1.2.3.2 The ancestral cult in statecraft

Another interesting comparison was drawn between 'the public business of statecraft' and 'the business of kinship' by Stover (1974:211). These two spheres of activities were linked by the practice of 'ancestor worship' in the ducal court since the Chou times. At this level of family life, the ruling family used 'ancestor worship' as a function in order to rally kinsmen around the business of government that was vested in them as a family oligarchy.

How were the ancestors venerated? The following section will briefly outline some of the basic elements of the cult. A more detailed examination of the historical development of the ancestral cult appears in chapter four.

1.2.3.3 The basic constituents of ancestral rites

The equipment used in the ancestral rites can be simple or ornate. The most important item in observing the ancestral rites is a photograph of the deceased or his name written on a piece of red paper, or a **sin p'hai** (an ancestral spirit tablet) or its equivalent which consists of a framed piece of paper with the requisite ritual formula written on it to indicate that it is to serve as the locale of the soul of the deceased ancestors.

The other most basic item is **heong** (joss stick). One joss stick is lit each morning and placed in a small glass containing uncooked rice or a **heong loo** (joss stick receptacle). The rite of **saau heong** (lighting the joss stick and bowing to the photograph or the tablet) is executed by holding the joss stick between the two palms. Immediately afterwards the joss stick is positioned in the heong loo. The rite is simple and it serves to remind the family of the ancestors. Whoever lights the joss stick will do so on behalf of the family so that there is no need for each person to repeat the rite. Some families encourage its members to take turns at the rite. In theory the rite is supposed to be observed by the males according to Chinese tradition. In practice many men leave this task to the womenfolk.

It is usual in an orthodox family to place a bowl of fruit in front of the ancestral tablet or a photograph of the deceased. It is not unusual to have three small Chinese cups of tea on the ancestor shelf too. On special occasions, offerings of food are placed in front of the tablet or photograph and three joss sticks are lit to invite the ancestors to share in the meal before the main festivities commence. A distinction is made by the Hakka between the two rites **keen tze kung** (making offerings to the ancestors) and **paai tze kung** (to show obeisance or respect to the ancestors).

Not all families observe the rite each day. Some will only light joss sticks on special occasions such as the anniversary of the death of a person or when a family birthday or a wedding occurs. Families who do not have a **sun chu t'oi** (ancestral altar or god-shelf), will use a low table or the top of the server for the same purpose.

The burning of **yee tz** (funerary paper items for burning) includes **ng'eoon tz** (mock money), **tz yee** (mock clothes), **lean vook** (mock house) and **fah p'ahn** (mock ignots of silver and gold). The sacrifice of these paper items by fire constitutes the more

religious aspect of the rites. The purpose of these immolatory offerings is to provide necessities for the spirits in the netherworld. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that the participant needs to believe that the items burnt will be of some use to someone, somewhere.

The burning of the requisite items of the yee tz is usually observed on the death anniversary of the deceased, on New Year's eve, at the Spring Festival, which coincides with the Sweeping of the Graves in March or April and when the Hungry Ghosts are fed in August or September, according to the lunar calendar.

Mock money which is also called 'hell money', resembles 'play money' and is usually burnt in large quantities. The mock ignots of silver and gold are rolled into the ignot shape from the rectangular paper, each sheet containing a small square of either silver or gold ink. It is believed that the dead require the 'hell money' in order to pay debts which may have been incurred in a previous life. The ritual money is also used to bribe the officials in hell, an unethical practice modelled on the corrupt habits of many officials in the present life. These ritual articles may be purchased from a number of shops which supply such ritual items. A brazier is usually used outdoors when these items need to be burnt. At traditional funerals a brazier is provided by the funeral parlour for use at the parlour and at the cemetery.

Chapter four will contain more detailed information on funerary rites.

1.3 THE RELEVANCE OF THIS STUDY

1.3.1 The challenge of a neglected phenomenon

1.3.1.1 Previous research on the Johannesburg Chinese ancestral cult

The Chinese community in Johannesburg is widely diffused in the various suburbs of the metropolis. Although all of them have become westernised in their lifestyle, a large number continue to observe certain age-old customs and religious practices in their homes.

In the writer's preliminary research on the religious customs of the Johannesburg Chinese community, it became obvious that this community's religious life had been neglected by the academic fraternity. The writer was privileged to present a paper entitled Chinese religion: The Chinese community in Southern Africa at the Association for the History of Religion (Southern Africa) (AHRSA) convention at the University of South Africa in 1981. This paper was subsequently published in Religion in Southern Africa (Jan 1982). The Human Science Research Council invited the writer to conduct research amongst the Chinese under the project title, The effects of South African Chinese religious trends in a pluralistic society. This project report formed part of the overall religious segment of the Main Committee's report; The South African Society: Realities and future prospects.

The most detailed study of the ancestral cult of the Johannesburg Chinese to date was conducted by King (MA Thesis 1974).

King offered an anthropological perspective on the traditional rituals practised by a comparatively small sample of fifteen families (1974:1) and an undisclosed number of informants. An analysis of King's thesis indicates that many of the traditional rites practised by the Chinese in Johannesburg appear to have had

as their focal point, the cult of the ancestors. King (1974:163) was of the opinion that the cult of the ancestors had entered a period of decline in the mid-1970s.

The small sample of fifteen families promotes the possibility that the smallness of the sample may have resulted in an inadequate assessment of the cult. The research by King did not take into account the influence of either the Catholic or the Protestant churches on the cult of the ancestors.

Although the submission date of King's thesis was 1974, her fieldwork was recorded between 1966-1967 (King 1974:9). Much has transpired during the intervening two decades since the fieldwork was carried out and the present research will seek to meet the challenge to update this aspect of the Chinese religious practices in Johannesburg.

1.3.1.2 The need for information

Information on the Chinese community in Johannesburg is extremely scant apart from the odd references in historical works on Johannesburg. Usually allusions are made to the Rand mining experiment involving Chinese miners during the 1904-1909 period. The local press does feature the Chinese community activities during the Chinese National Day festivities on the tenth of October. It is only very occasionally that the local Chinese receive some attention in the local newspapers.

No research has been conducted on the Chinese religious movements in Johannesburg for the past twenty two years. The information gathered in the course of this research will be made available to the participating Chinese Protestant churches and other interested parties for their information. Future researchers will hopefully find in this present work some basis for an ongoing process of studies of the Johannesburg Chinese community and its religious practices.

1.3.2. The state of the Chinese Protestant Churches

1.3.2.1 The need for an assessment

Chinese Protestants have been in existence in Johannesburg since the mid-1950s or earlier. This means that their ministry has been in operation for almost four decades and it should therefore be able to withstand a critical assessment. The following are a few of the questions which need to be asked: How have the churches dealt with the influences of the ancestral cult in the community at large? Have the churches introduced a programme in which the ancestral cult can be historically and culturally studied? How much do the church leaders know about the ancestral cult?

Historically this study will be the first to attempt this task.

1.3.2.2 The need for empirical data

This study will also be the first to co-ordinate a wide-range of statistical, organizational and programmes data on the Chinese Protestants in Johannesburg. In other words, the churches will be asked to indicate their membership statistics, their basic form of government, their special ministries to the elderly as well as the involvement of the elderly in the church programmes. Of special interest will be the attitudes of the church leaders towards aspects of the ancestral cult.

1.3.2.3 The level of continued cultic participation

A key area of examination will be the ongoing problem which converts experience when faced with the continuance of certain cultural practices which may be considered as contrary to their new faith.

This study will therefore seek to identify certain major aspects of the ancestral cult which continue to invite support from the Chinese Protestant Christians in Johannesburg.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

1.4.1 The thesis

The supposition for this research will be as follows:

'Although the cult of the ancestors will continue to be practised in the foreseeable future, the growing influence of Protestant teaching is bringing about resistance to the practice and the level of acceptance of this cult among the Johannesburg Protestant Chinese.'

The aim of this research will be to examine the relevant available data in order to test the above thesis.

1.4.2 The objectives

1.4.2.1 To present an overview of the ancestor cult

The ancestor cult is complex. Its historical development and gradual integration into the very fibre of Chinese culture presents an interesting insight in the way Chinese people think. One of the objectives of this study will therefore be to provide such an overview.

1.4.2.2 To provide verifiable empirical information

The lack of up-to-date information concerning Chinese statistics as well as patterns of religious behavior among the Johannesburg Chinese people will be dealt with as far as the Protestant community is concerned.

1.4.2.3 To examine the question of continuity and discontinuity

Conversion from traditional Chinese beliefs to Christianity does not necessarily result in the complete rejection of all the religiously orientated aspects of Chinese culture. The question to be addressed will be whether it is indeed necessary to reject one's ethnic culture because one changes one's traditional beliefs. Put more specifically, what aspects of one's traditional beliefs and practices can be continued after the individual had converted to the Christian faith?

1.4.2.4 To contribute to the knowledge of religious practices

The religious affiliations, practices and trends of the Chinese have not been researched in depth for two decades and therefore a gap exists in this field of knowledge. Hopefully this study will contribute to the knowledge of religious practices among the Chinese people of Johannesburg.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.5.1 The relationship between filiality and the ancestor cult

Chapters three and four of this research will show that an indissoluble relationship exists between the cult of the ancestors and the concept and practice of filial piety.

1.5.1.1 Filiality as the basis of Chinese culture

Filial piety is more than the provision of basic needs for one's parents. In Chinese philosophy, the concept of filiality enjoys a wide field of application. It not only regulates the relationship between parents and offsprings but its practice also schools the young person to relate to strangers of different ranks. The discipline inherent in observing the filial rites ultimately prepares the individual for service to his king and

country.

1.5.1.2 The ancestor cult as the development of filiality

The historical background to the development of the ancestor cult is to be found in the legendary period of China's history. The strong family ties so traditional of the Chinese, have been equated with a corporation (Stover 1974:207) which even death cannot break. The oracular link which the ancient Chinese maintained with their ancestors is evidenced in the oracle bone sub-culture of the Shang dynasty (1766-1122 BC).

It was considered a virtue in the practice of filiality to continue to treat the deceased as if they were still alive.

1.5.1.3 The uniting element of the ancestor cult

The ancestor cult is practised by Chinese traditionalists regardless of their particular preference, be it Confucianism, Taoism or Buddhism which the Chinese collectively call the 'three teachings'. Whether the Chinese person follows all three or only one of the teachings, the observance of the ancestor rites serves as a uniting element and as a common denominator in Chinese society.

1.5.2 Ethnic culture and post-Christian conversion conflicts

The new Christian convert from a traditionalist Chinese background usually finds himself in a cultural cleft-stick as far as his culture and religion are concerned. He finds that he is occasionally confronted with a conflict between aspects of his traditional culture and his new faith.

1.5.2.1 The need for a theology of culture

Germane to the theoretical framework of this study is the recognition that an ongoing conflict exists between certain aspects of one's ethnic cultural values and practices and those found in Christianity. Useful work is being done by some groups in an attempt to resolve the conflicts which arise between one's ethnic cultural background and the beliefs and practices of Christianity. Two organizations involved in such work are: Ching Feng: Quarterly notes on Christianity and Chinese Religion and Culture, published in Hong Kong by The Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, and to a lesser extent, China Notes, published in New York by the National Council of Churches.

However, an urgent need continues to exist for the formulation of a theology of culture for the Chinese Protestant Christians. The writer accepts the view that Christianity is not in itself a culture but that it is above culture. The Christian message acts as a catalyst in the life of the convert, from whatever culture he may be. All the good in each culture is a gift of God (James 1:17 GNB).

1.6 METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Multi-faceted approach

The thesis topic 'The effects of Protestant Christianity on the Chinese cult of the ancestors as practised in the Johannesburg area', touches upon a number of major aspects, each of which needs to be elaborated. A brief overview of what Protestant Christianity is, and an in-depth examination of the nature of the ancestor cult of the Chinese will constitute two basic aspects of this study. The nucleus of the study will be the analysis of the response of the Chinese to Protestant Christianity. In order to accomplish this, the various Chinese Protestant Churches and para-church groups will be examined with special reference to

the veneration of ancestors.

1.6.1.1 A 'cultural' approach

The above tasks invite an all-embracing cultural approach, which does not necessarily distinguish between the various academic disciplines but which will use all the available information on the topic in order to mould a new body of knowledge. Thus, archaeology as well as anthropology will join hands with history and Chinese philosophy in order to help reach a clearer understanding of the topic.

1.6.1.2 Major aspects to be dealt with

The major aspects which will be researched include the following: A brief account of the immigration of the Chinese to South Africa will be given in chapter two. The unfavourable economic and political milieu of Mainland China during the early twentieth century will be mentioned as reasons for the Chinese leaving their country of birth.

Chapter three will provide a general description of Chinese religion and chapter four will trace the development of the ancestor cult to the present time.

The various Chinese Protestant Churches and groups in Johannesburg will be closely examined in chapter five in order to provide the necessary background to the following chapter.

Chapter six will provide the opportunity for an analysis of the responses of the churches to the major questionnaire.
The final chapter will sum up the findings within the framework of continuity and discontinuity.

1.6.1.3 Transliteration of Chinese terms

Information for this study will be drawn from three dialect groups, namely the Mandarin, Hakka and Cantonese speaking Chinese in Johannesburg. The Wade-Giles method of transliteration will be followed in the case of Mandarin. The writer has elected to use his own method to transliterate the Hakka and Cantonese terms as the Johannesburg Chinese themselves do not speak a uniform Hakka or Cantonese. The terms will be **bold-printed** the first time they appear in the text. A number of Chinese terms not of importance for inclusion in the glossary, will nevertheless be bold-printed. A glossary of the English equivalent of the Chinese terms will appear at the end of this study. Some of the Chinese terms will be transliterated in more than one dialect. The dialect of each term will be indicated by a (C) for Cantonese, (H) for Hakka and (M) for Mandarin.

1.6.2. Source materials

1.6.2.1 Primary sources

A number of primary sources will be utilised in this research. In order to obtain empirical information, two questionnaires will be used. The first will be referred to as the Youth questionnaire (Appendix C), and will consist of two simple questions. This random sample will consist of one hundred young sportspersons in the fifteen to twenty-four years age bracket in a universe of 773 (1985 census).

The second questionnaire (Appendix B) which will be known as the Major questionnaire, will be administered to approximately 130 adults, that is, individuals who are eighteen years and older, who consider themselves as Protestants or who have some association with the Protestant movement. The possible universe for this group who have been placed in the fifteen to sixty five years and older bracket, is 3 256 (1985 census).

Information recently obtained from a series of interviews and from a video recording of the **haam n'yeap moon** (inviting home of the soul) ceremony will constitute the contents of Appendix C. This primary source material from the People's Republic of China has not been recorded before by anyone in South Africa.

Interviews will provide another valuable source of information. Not all the interviewees will be Christian or Protestant. In fact some of them were especially chosen to represent the views of those who follow the traditional ancestor cultic practices.

The writer was involved in the community for seventeen years as the minister of one of the Chinese Protestant Churches. He has continued to be involved in various aspects of the ministry. This enables him to draw on his personal experiences and insights on a participant-spectator basis.

The main published primary source materials to be consulted will consist of books such as the Bible, the Confucian Classics and other traditional material such as the Book of Rewards and Punishments, and the I-Li. First hand missionary reports dating back to the early years of the twentieth century will also be used.

1.6.2.2 Secondary sources

Secondary sources will be drawn from historical documents, unpublished research material, books on myths and religion, anthropology, archaeology, history and philosophy and journals on general cultural interest.
An adapted form of the Harvard reference system will be used. The numeral '3' in 'J J M de Groot (1972;3:855)' (p 118) refers to volume 3. The name 'Hsun Tzu' in 'Watson 1967;Hsun Tzu:109-110' (p 145) refers to the translation of the Hsun Tzu classic in Watson's one volume work on three Chinese classics.

2.0 THE BACKGROUND TO CHINESE EMIGRATION

The Chinese who emigrated from China to work in various parts of the world in mines, building railroads, in the homes of the wealthy, and the intrepid entrepreneurs who sought to establish themselves in foreign countries during the twentieth century, were mainly from the various southern coastal provinces of China. South China in this study will refer to the area south of the Yangtze River. The majority of the early immigrants to South Africa were from the Kwangtung Province and the two major linguistic groups represented at present in South Africa are the Cantonese who are in the majority, and the Hakka speaking Chinese.

Both linguistic groups brought with them to South Africa their cultural traits which included their religious practices. An attempt will be made in this part of the study to ascertain the nature of the religious milieu of South China during the first half of the twentieth century in order to better understand the present status and practice of ancestor veneration in the Johannesburg area where the majority of the South African Chinese reside.

2.1 THE RELIGIOUS MILIEU OF SOUTHERN CHINA

2.1.1 de Groot's 'uniformity' principle

J J M de Groot (1972;1:ix) the eminent Dutch sinologist whose work on the religions of the Chinese is a standard classic, enunciated a useful principle for the study of Chinese religious practices. He noted in his introductory remarks to his study that because of the great uniformity which exists on the more important points concerning the social and religious life of the Chinese, any description of Chinese religious practices in a local setting may also be applied to the rest of the country.

The conservative nature of the Chinese can vouchsafe a fairly accurate description of their religious practices of the past. Their typical reticence to neglect or to replace traditional rites and rituals serves as a useful aid to the researcher of religious practices (Burkhardt 1981;3:56).

The principle laid down by de Groot will be applied in the examination of the Chinese religious milieu of the first half of the twentieth century in South China.

2.1.2 The use of missionary reports

The question may be raised as to why missionary material was used to provide some information on the state of Chinese religion in southern China during the decade of 1915-1925. No published material *per se* has been traced by the writer by any Chinese on this particular subject. Two reasons may be given: the national situation did not prove conducive to the academic analysis of the religious state of the southern provinces; the Chinese did not suddenly feel the need to document a system of traditional practices which had been widely diffused throughout the country for many centuries. The situation may be likened to the African situation in which the missionaries documented African history, religious practices and the patterns of their social structures. In both China and Africa, what was unusual and new to the missionaries was common-place to the native peoples.

2.1.3 Chinese religion in South China

2.1.3.1 Superstition or spiritual over-insurance

At first glance the general religious habits of the Chinese seem extremely superstitious, if one is to apply the common dictionary definition of the word as 'misdirected reverence'. The Chinese people could in fact be described as being superstitious and not religious in the Western sense because much of the content of

their religious rites are related to spirits, demons, subsidiary gods as well as their own pursuit of happiness.

The Chinese, like many other ancient peoples, filled the rocks and trees around them with spirits, beneficent and malevolent. Burkhardt (1981;1:171) was of the opinion that 'they collected divinities with the same enthusiasm and lack of discrimination as a boy philatelist' and their tolerance was extended to their divinities who were not expected to demand the sole allegiance of their followers.

Chinese religious practices are in fact attempts to satisfy the needs of the living and the dead. The methods whereby the religious needs of the living are met, may be further divided into the following categories: the gods of professions to assist the individuals in their daily tasks, the gods of nature, such as the earth and star deities, the role of charms and talismans and the various forms of divination, which include fortune telling and clairvoyance. The practice of **Feng-Shui** (wind-water, or geomancy) links the world of the living with that of the deceased. The Chinese people seem to be spiritually over-insured.

The spiritual needs of the deceased are met by means of sacrifices of food, drinks, mock paper clothes, mock money and paper houses. These sacrifices are offered on special occasions and festivals to provide sustenance and comfort for the ancestors. The ancestor cult is dealt with in greater detail in chapter four and the nature of Chinese religion is dealt with at length in chapter three. The material which immediately follows, contains examples of the way the traditionally-minded Chinese in the southern provinces of China and elsewhere continue to meet their spiritual needs.

2.1.3.2 Divination, charms and taboos

Divination played a major role in the lives of the people as it

removed their doubts as to the course of their actions. This method of foretelling the future or to follow the right course of action, has been practised by European races as well by the Chinese since the remotest times down to the present day (Dore 1966:i fn 1).

In the early days the tortoise shell and the milfoil were used to divine the will of the Deity. The 'eight diagrams' came into use after the vogue for tortoise shells and milfoil had passed. The eight diagrams system of divination known as the **I Ching** (the Classic of Changes) has been in use since the twelfth century BC. It continues to be the standard manual of fortune-tellers to the present day. The use of lots, normally found in temples, has also continued to the present time. A further method of divination is the dissecting and changing of Chinese characters by a literate person. Omens and the belief in lucky and unlucky days are very widely accepted and indeed affect the life of the Chinese at every level (Dore 1966:x-xvi).

Lucky charms and talismans continue to be widely used by the Chinese wherever they live. Talismans include symbols on the roofs, walls, bridges or pagodas on hills. Charms may consist of pictures of spirits or gods, words which are thought to possess special powers are inscribed on paper scrolls or even stone tablets (Burkhardt 1981;1:167).

It is still common in many Chinese homes at present to find rectangular slips of red paper with 'strong words' inscribed on them in the belief that such words will ward off evil forces or bring the family good luck and success. The Chinese list of 'superstitious beliefs' surpass those of the English for example when it comes to the role of animals, birds and the celestial bodies and their influence on the life of people.

Taboos connected with eating and drinking vary according to the locality of the community. The fishing communities along the

coastline do not turn over fish in a dish as the action may bring about the capsizing of a fishing vessel. This particular taboo was emphasized to the writer while he lived in Hong Kong in 1971-1972. An empty glass foreshadows empty nets and chopsticks are never placed across the rice bowl after a meal as it symbolises a vessel run aground (Burkhardt 1981;1:169-170).

2.1.3.3 Three popular deities

Three deities have gained exceptional favour among the Chinese people: **Kuan Yin**, (the Goddess of mercy) and possibly the most popular deity in China; **Kuan Ti** (the God of war) and **Tsao Wang** (the God of the hearth, or the Kitchen God).

Hodous (1974:4) writes that the household gods common to all parts of China are the Kitchen God, **Choy Sun** (the God of Wealth) and Kuan Yin. Besides these each locality has deities which are placed in the family pantheon. These are all remembered toward the end of the year, with incense, candles and food.

Kuan Yin was originally the male Indian god Avalokitesvara who was worshipped by the Mahayana School from the third to the seventh century of our era. The god's transformation occurred in Chinese Buddhism sometime in the sixth century. Kuan Yin has become the symbol of Chinese womanhood as well as an object lesson in filial piety because of her obedient spirit and personal sacrifice to heal her father who had mistreated her and later killed her by strangulation (Hodous 1974:68-74).

Kuan Ti was originally known as Kuan Yu and lived in the second century of our era. His military exploits coupled with his sincerity and loyalty brought about his deification as a culture hero of the picturesque period of Chinese history known as the Three Kingdoms (AD 221-264). His popularity is well deserved as he occupies a number of divine portfolios: he is well-known as a destroyer of demons (Christie 1968:112). He is recognized as the

God of War and he also shares the prestigous portfolio of a God of Literature with Confucius (Hodous 1974:164-174). Kuan Yu was deified with the title 'ti' meaning 'god' in 1594 during the Ming dynasty (Dore 1966;6:80).

The Hearth God Tsao Wang, is also known as the Kitchen God. Hodous (1974:214-216) associates the Kitchen God with the God of Fire and as a representative of the Stellar God identified with the Ursa Major. When the Stellar God was subordinated to the God of Heaven, the Kitchen God became the representative of the God of Heaven on earth. The custom of sending off the God of the Hearth at the end of the year to report to Heaven was already well established during the Sung dynasty (AD 960-1278) and continues to the present. The Kitchen God acts as a moral policeman who represents Heaven in the home. The kitchen should therefore be kept clean with no foul-smelling wood burnt in the stove. It is said that women rarely scold in the kitchen and wicked plots are seldom plotted there. The new bride offers her worship to the Kitchen God by burning incense as does any household member who starts out on a journey (Hodous 1974:214-219).

2.1.3.4 Some descriptions of Chinese religious beliefs

The state of Chinese religious beliefs during the early years of the twentieth century in South China can also be inferred from their ancient and conservatively maintained practices over a period of many centuries. Burkhardt (1981;3:14) who is an expert on the southern provincial Chinese creeds and customs, described the Chinese concept of religion as follows:

> The conception of a personal God, Lord and Creator of the Universe, never occurred to the Chinese, but, if they have an overriding divinity it is Luck. In the quest for good fortune in their mundane affairs they will propitiate any divinity, from the Lord Buddha

> to the legendary Monkey, who has the reputation of possessing the power to grant their desire. No spirits or belief dating from the most primitive times, seems to have been discarded, whilst they are always receptive to new ideas if they promise to be advantageous.

The Chinese are also concerned for the happiness of their dead in the afterlife. How they seek to accomplish this is dealt with in chapter four.

Burkhardt (1981;3:29, 56-57) also made the following salient observations: The worship of the spirits of the departed is the basis of all religious belief. The conservative nature of the Chinese has induced him to retain his 'primitive' ideas that all inanimate objects of nature may influence him, that all his ancestors still retain the family connection and that he is therefore surrounded by the supernatural in every walk of life.

That the Chinese are animistic to a very large degree is not doubted. They attribute spiritual life to pictures, idols, natural objects, both stellar and earthly. They deify the spirits of folk and community heroes while they take for granted the continued existence and the role of their own ancestors. It is probably for this reason that young Chinese children are brought up with the injunction not to deny the existence of spirits, for they are to be found even one metre above one's head!

To the casual observer of Chinese customs, Chinese religion may well appear to be 'the <u>melange</u> of animism, Tao-Buddhist scraps and patches, folk-myth and magic and long centuries of supernatural practices that is now the religion of the Chinese' (Bloomfield 1983:36).

2.1.4 Christianity in South China

2.1.4.1 Missions and the 'Unfair Treaties'

The early years of the twentieth century were far from being conducive to Christian missionary enterprise anywhere in China. Missionaries nevertheless entered many areas both in the interior of the country as well as the coastal regions. The missionary movement into the interior of the country occurred after the signing of the 1860 Peking Conventions between China, the Western nations and Japan after the conclusion of the so-called Opium wars. One of the Treaty clauses gave the right to foreigners to travel freely and to purchase property anywhere in China. Missionaries were accorded the right to propagate their religion everywhere in China.

Broomhall (1981:8) observed that it was only after the Cheefoo Convention in 1876 that imperial protection became a reality and foreign diplomatic, commercial and religious missions to China multiplied.

Although the traditional beliefs in China had taken root very deeply, the exigencies of the times did not dim the zeal of the faithful missionaries.

The material which appears below will attempt to portray a measure of the successes and failures experienced by the missionaries working in parts of South China during the twentieth century. The Christian missionary movement in South China was a slow but gallant attempt, as the following sample of chronological missionary reports will indicate.

The researcher is greatly indebted to the publishers of the missionary journal ECHOES OF SERVICE (hereafter designated as EOS) which contains valuable insights into many aspects of missionary activity in many parts of the world. Selected sample

reports by missionaries working in China, south of the Yangtze River have been extracted from this journal. The period chosen covers a decade of Christian activities, from 1915 to 1925, and provides some useful and interesting background material for this study to coincide with the central period of emigration of Chinese from that area to South Africa.

An attempt has been made by the researcher to retain the original tone and the terseness of some of the reports. The first extract relates to the baptism of seventeen believers.

2.1.4.2 Encouragements in the work of evangelism

The eleven women and six men were publicly baptised on 4 October 1915 at Fengsin. A number of them became Christians due to the testimony of their partners at home. A scholar who helped the Fengsin missionaries with the writing out of texts in the Chinese script, gradually believed what he was copying out for them. He too was one of the baptismal candidates (EOS 2/1916:51-52).

Ruth Norman, writing on her experiences during October to the end of November 1915, included the news that she saw 'the prosperity of the work' in the city of Fengsin, that she participated in different women's classes, visited gospel meetings and also the schools for boys and girls. Visits were also made to the lepers' huts and the blind beggers' refuge (EOS 2/1916:68).

2.1.4.3 The zeal of the non-Christians

Writing about his visit to the mission station at Ma-la-k'eo, J A Gordon remarked that 'it was an oft-visited centre, but we know of no believer there' (EOS 3/1916:113).

A missionary noted in a report dated October 1915 that the largest and finest of the forty-eight temples in the city of Nanching had been gutted by fire and that over a thousand idols

were destroyed in the blaze. Only one large wooden image was rescued and placed in a nearby temple where it was robed in a handsome embroidered scarlet garment. The missionary reported that when she visited the city a few days later, she saw crowds of Chinese 'bowing down, offering incense, burning candles, etc., in worship to it'. A report was also circulated that the idols had sacrificed themselves to prevent a great calamity befalling the city. The people of the city responded with great zeal in the collection of over 10 000 Mexican dollars for the purpose of rebuilding the temple (EOS 1/1916:32).

A clear indication of the vibrant zeal of the followers of folk religion may be seen in the following report.

While on a reconnoitre trip in the early months of 1916 for a suitable site to pitch a gospel tent later that year in September, missionaries Alderson and Clarke decided on the vicinity of a large temple situated between the cities of Nanchang and Juichow. They had decided on that locality in order to catch 'the thousands or ten thousands of worshippers' who make the pilgrimage there at that time (EOS 4/1916:131-132).

2.1.4.4 The problem of 'rice Christians'

In the missionary report submitted by Misses S A Holt and K Atkinson on their three years of labour at Tienpao in Kiangsi province, a number of their attitudes towards mission work may be pinpointed. They wrote about 'rice' Christians as those who join the church to obtain benefits only, such as a Western orientated education or the medical facilities which the two ladies described as 'being taken for granted'. They stressed the need to keep in mind their initial object and task as missionaries: the preaching of the gospel. They were also careful to make some small charge for their medicines as many people who consulted them could well afford the modest charges (EOS 6/1916:233).

After the revolution of 1911, the number of Chinese Protestants grew rapidly: by 1915 there were 800 000 believers which included those under instruction. This represented a growth of about 40% in five years. Chinese Christian workers during this same period had more than doubled: from 836 in 1915 to 1 745 in 1920. A remarkable increase in the number of Christian schools and colleges as well as medical training centres was also noted. Christian witness in the form of literature distribution and Bible translation was also reported by various missionary societies (Lea 1975:239).

Harry Price, a missionary operating in Kwangsi, reported that opium addicts sought help from the missionaries to break the habit (EOS 2/1921:39).

Thomas and Annie J Melville, missionaries in Fengsin wrote concerning a seventy year old lady who had been a vegetarian for many years. She had hoped to gain spiritual favour thereby, but later decided to accept Christ as her Saviour. It appears that the taking of a vegetarian's vow was equated by the missionaries as having committed one's spiritual life to a force of darkness (EOS 5/1921:110).

Missionary Hopkins did not become discouraged in his work. Writing on the 19 November 1925, he said, 'In spite of all the unrest, anti-foreign and anti-Christian uprisings and evil strife, the missionaries had wonderful opportunities to preach the gospel' (EOS 2/1926:39).

Other missionaries however, had a vision for China which seemed to look beyond the immediate political upheavals of that period. One such visionary was D E Hoste, Hudson Taylor's successor as General Director of the China Inland Mission. He called for 200 evangelists to enter China within two years to penetrate all her provinces with the Christian gospel. This was duly accomplished by 1930 (Lyall 1985:19).

In spite of the civil war and the war with Japan, the Christian church continued to grow amongst the Chinese in many parts of the country.

2.1.4.5 Indigenous Church growth

However, the foreign missionaries were not the only ones who were spreading the gospel in China. A prime example of an indigenous Chinese church group which attempted to do its share of evangelization was the 'Little Flock' established by Nee Duo-sheng, more popularly known in the West as Watchman Nee. In terms of numerical strength, the Little Flock numbered 70 000 in 1949 and was in fact the fifth largest group of Chinese Christians in the country (Grubb, World Christian Handbook, 1949, cited by Lyall (1973:10).

The work of the missionaries represents but a small aspect of the religious milieu of South China. Their limited success should be seen in the perspective of the principle which de Groot (1972;1:ix) enunciated concerning the universality and the conservative nature of Chinese religious practices.

2.2 THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPHEAVALS IN CHINA

The unfavourable political and social conditions in China during the twentieth century encouraged emigration from China to various parts of the world (Pineo 1985:4).
In spite of the great distance which separated China from South Africa, some Chinese were nevertheless prepared to travel to this sub-continent to seek work opportunities and to settle here.

It is essential that the political and the social milieu of these Chinese immigrants be understood in order that their reasons for emigrating from China can be appreciated.

The cumulative effects of China's international relationships with foreign countries since the Sino-British War of 1839-42, which were more commonly known as the Opium Wars, and the resultant changes which occurred in her national life, caused China's loss of her status in the international community. These factors also contributed to the low morale of the nation.

This great Far Eastern hegemon had in fact lost her sense of direction from about the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. The accompanying natural disasters of the period more than encouraged the many thousands of Chinese to seek a future elsewhere, including South Africa. The causes which spurred on the Chinese emigration to many parts of the world are briefly outlined below.

2.2.1 China's international relationships

2.2.1.1 China's Opium Wars and territorial losses

China's relationship with the Western nations and Japan at the turn of the twentieth century was most unsatisfactory. She had lost her international standing when Britain defeated her in the Opium Wars, which commenced in 1839 and reached a finality in the signing of the Peking Conventions in 1860. The First Sino-British war (1839-1842) resulted in the defeat of China and the signing of the Treaty of Nanking (29 August 1842) and the Supplementary Treaty of the Bogue (8 October 1843). A war indemnity of $21 000 000 was claimed by Britain (Li 1978:393). The Second Opium War (1858-1860) was fought by the Chinese against a combined British-French force. China again lost this war and the treaties signed were those of Tientsin and the Conventions of Peking (Broomhall 1981:8). An indemnity of 16 000 000 **Taels** was demanded, half of which went to France and the other half to Britain.

China was on the silver standard and as a consequence of the various indemnities which were imposed on her, much of her

national wealth flowed out of the poverty-stricken country. The tael is not a minted Chinese coin, but a measure of silver which was equivalent to an ounce. The price of silver fluctuated and the tael was therefore subjected to market pressures. In 1910 it was worth $0.54 while ten years later it was worth $1.34. The value dropped to $0.38 in 1930 and reached $0.64 in 1935 (Vinacke 1960:841).

The murder of a number of shipwrecked Ryukyuan sailors on the island of Taiwan in 1873 caused the Japanese to seek retribution from the Chinese who at that time controlled Taiwan. The Japanese were successful in their negotiations with China to establish her own hegemony over the Ryukyuan islands by demanding and receiving compensation to the value of 500 000 taels 'ostensibly in compensation for buildings and roads that they had built in Taiwan during their expedition' (Moulder 1979:123).

China had been forced to open her main ports and her major waterways to foreign powers. She had allowed the establishment of concession areas such as the one in Tientsin in North China and the foreign legation quarters at her capital city of Peking. Her weak state and her lack of international respect had allowed the foreign powers to establish what amounted to virtual pockets of imperial governments on Chinese soil.

Territorial losses also resulted from the various military and naval encounters with the Western powers and Japan. Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. The Kowloon Peninsula was further ceded to Britain by the Peking Convention in 1860. Russia received the maritime province between the Ussuri and the Pacific Ocean in 1860 by the Sino-Russian Treaty of Peking in 1860. China's suzerainty over Annam (Vietnam) was lost to the French with the signing of the Sino-French Convention which is also known as the Li-Fournier Convention of 1885 (Vinacke 1960:64).

The Sino-Japanese war of 1894-5 and the resultant Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895 with its harsh terms further weakened an already ailing China. Japan had imposed a war indemnity of 200 000 000 taels ($150 m) and an additional indemnity of 30 000 000 taels ($22.5m) in lieu of Kwangtung Peninsula which the Tripartite Intervention forced Japan to restore to China. Apart from this large indemnity, China also lost to Japan the suzerainty over Korea and the islands of Formosa (the present Republic of China) the Pescadores and the Peninsula of Liaotung (Vinacke 1960:143-44).

2.2.1.2 The Boxer Rebellion: more war indemnities

Five years later, the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 further pummeled China. This rebellion has been described as 'a direct-action response to a deepening crisis in the lives of the whole Chinese people' (Fairbank and Reischauer 1979:377).

This Rebellion, which in Chinese is known as the **I-ho ch'uan** (Righteous and Harmonious Fists), was an anti-foreign movement which originally sought to overthrow the Manchu government in China. By 1900 their slogan had changed from 'Down with the Manchus' to 'Down with the foreigners'. Their aim was to eliminate all foreign elements in China, including Christian missionaries and their Chinese converts. The rebellion propelled China into the closing decade of the Manchu rule with disasterous results.

With the support of the Empress Dowager and her government the Boxers embarked on a massacre of foreigners and Christian Chinese in the northern provinces. They also laid siege to the Tientsin Concession and the Peking Legation Quarters. The seriousness of the situation necessitated the despatch of an international relief force which quickly defeated the Boxers. Further war indemnities were imposed and the 'punishment' of certain northern provinces was meted out in the cancellation of the civil service

examinations in the cities where the Boxers had received much of their support (Li 1978:428-431).

The most significant territorial loss to China was Manchuria, which Russia occupied. The stationing of 45 000 foreign troops on Chinese soil served as an apt reminder to the Chinese of their subserviency to the foreign nations even though technically they still retained their sovereignty.

The Boxer Protocol was signed on the 7 September 1901 by Li Hung-chang, a Manchu prince, and the plenipotentiaries of eleven countries. This protocol made provision for a war indemnity of 450 000 000 taels, which was secured on foreign customs.

According to Haldane (1965:226) the indemnity was equivalent to 67 000 000 pounds. The accrued interest over the repayment period of thirty nine years exacted the staggering final sum of 980 000 000 taels which meant that an additonal 20 million pounds per annum in interest alone was added to the tax burden of the impoverished Chinese people.

Chinese anti-missionary incidents which numbered thirty four during the decade of the 1860s cost China an additional 877 000 taels (Moulder 1979:127).

2.2.2 China's internal developments

Relatively few Chinese movements opposed the Manchu government during their 267 year dynasty. The most significant anti-Manchu movements were those connected with secret societies.

2.2.2.1 The T'ai-Ping Rebellion

The **T'ai-Ping** (Great Peace) was one such movement (Durant 1954:805). It commenced an armed rebellion in 1850 and established a capital at Nanking until 1864 when they were

finally defeated by the government forces, which were aided at one stage by foreign mercenaries under the command of F.T. Ward, an American. The British army also seconded Major C.G. Gordon to lead a small Sino-foreign army in the recapturing of Soochow while a small Franco-Chinese force recaptured Hangchow (Fairbank and Reischauer 1979:305).

When the end of the rebellion came, it was accompanied by the mass suicide of 100 000 T'ai-Ping supporters who chose death at their own hands rather than surrender. Approximately 20 million Chinese died and eleven provinces were laid waste during the rebellion (Cary-Elwes 1957:215). The rebellion also destroyed 600 cities (Durant 1954:758).

The relative successes of the T'ai-Pings encouraged the Nien Rebellion (1853-68) in the area of the Grand Canal between the Huai and Yellow Rivers. In 1855 the Muslims in the south-west also rebelled against the Manchus. This rebellion was put down in 1873. The Muslims in the north-west also staged a rebellion which lasted from 1862 till 1873.

2.2.2.2 The need for reforms recognized

Certain Chinese were aware of the need for drastic changes which could take at least three guises: the overthrow of the Manchu government: the reform of the monarchy with a more democratic constitution: or China could adopt a republican form of government. It was not that the Manchu government was unaware of the need to reform. Another conservative reform movement, known as the Self-Strengthening Programme, enjoyed the support of the young Emperor Kuang-shu, whose royal aunt, the Empress Dowager Tz'u-shi kept a close watch on his reform involvement with certain Chinese radical leaders such as K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (Fairbank & Reischauer 1979:375).

The so-called Hundred days Reform lasted from June 11 to Sept 21

1898. An attempt was made to introduce reforms along the lines of the Japanese Meiji model which enabled Japan to catch up with the West in many respects within a matter of forty five years. When reforms touched upon certain issues which the Empress Dowager considered to have been too sensitive and threatening to the well-being of the Manchu throne, she staged a coup d'etat on 21 September 1898. Apart from her personal motives for the seizure of the government, one should also bear in mind the traditional conservative nature of the Chinese. The adoption of any foreign ideology was only considered if it did not militate against Chinese culture.

2.2.2.3 The rise of Chinese nationalism

Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) modern China's most famous nationalist, epitomized the Empress Dowager's fear of what Western education and a desire for a constitutional and representative government could lead to amongst China's Western-educated elite. Not only was he strongly nationalistic and therefore anti-Manchu, he also sought to change the traditional imperial form of government to that of a Republic. Not even a constitutional monarchy was acceptable to him or to members of the **Tung-meng Hui** (United League). Sun's political dogmas were expressed in his **San Min Chu-I** (Three Principles of the People) (Sun 1981). These principles were: **Min Tsu** (Nationalism), **Min Ch'uan** (Democracy) and **Min Sheng** (People's Livelihood). For all his zeal and energy expanded in his cause, he was nevertheless not a truly successful 'rebel'. Wilbur (1976) in actual fact used the description 'frustrated patriot' as the title of his book on Sun Yat-sen.

In spite of the gradual but significant growth of opposition to them, the Manchu government continued to function from its capital at Peking with a surprising resilience. The decentralization of government enabled the Manchus to maintain control in spite of localized uprisings even as serious as the fratricidal T'ai-Ping Rebellion.

The anti-foreign Boxer Rebellion (Eberhard 1960:299) which brought China to her nadir was in fact a vengeful reaction to a long period of national frustration at the hands of foreigners.

2.2.2.4 Natural disasters

The Chinese had been subjected to one war after another, either involving foreigners or their own kith and kin during the past century. Nor was nature kind to the people of China. Droughts, floods and famine had been the constant companions of the Chinese for many centuries.

In 1855 the Yellow River which is also known as 'China's sorrow', tore open the dike on its left bank at Tungwa Hsiang, about 48 kms from Kaifeng. During the next six years while engineers attempted to repair the damaged dike, the river wandered northeastward to the sea in many channels. It finally settled into its present channel in 1861. In September 1887 the dikes on the river bank at the Honan city of Chengchou were breached. The flood surged through at least 1 500 towns and villages, and left in its wake approximately 2.5 million dead by drowning, starvation and disease (Clark 1983:42,46). In 1938 the river again shifted its course southwards, thereby causing very many deaths (Fairbank & Reischauer 1979:10).

2.2.2.5 China's litany of social and political sorrows

The future for China looked bleak indeed as the world entered the twentieth century. She continued to be encumbered with mounting foreign debts, war indemnities, and an economic crisis which could only worsen and further depress the 400 000 000 people, most of whom were impoverished, hungry and war-weary. They had been under foreign Manchu domination since 1644 and had experienced the shame of territorial losses since the Opium Wars.

They had further experienced the ignominy of being an unofficially colonised nation. Not even the overthrow of their Manchu overlords could guarantee them either peace or unity. They were yet to fight Japan again in the 1937-45 war and experience one more civil war caused by the differing ideologies of Marxism and Capitalism as represented by Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek, respectively.

Following the Sian incident of 12 December 1936, the forces of Mao and Chiang were united under the latter's command to fight the Japanese (Clubb 1964:208-209).

Even during this second Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945) the supposedly united Chinese forces of Mao and Chiang were fighting each other while they were theoretically fighting their common enemy, the Japanese. The People's Liberation Army of the Chinese Communist Party continued their civil war against the forces of the Kuomintang after Japan's defeat. When the Communists overran China, the Nationalist Government set up a government in exile on the island of Formosa in 1949.

The litany of China's sorrows over the past century contains the psychological and economic reasons for Chinese emigrating to other parts of the world during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Many of them wished to escape the wars, and uprisings, the widespread banditry as well as the aftermath of the recurring droughts and the floods.

2.3 THE PATTERN OF CHINESE IMMIGRATION DURING THE PERIOD 1900-1950s

When examining the immigration pattern of the Chinese to South Africa subsequent to 1900 and up to the 1950s it will be necessary to take into consideration three important factors:

(1) The various pre-and post-Union laws (1885-1953) which

discouraged immigration from the East and largely determined the pattern of Chinese immigration.

(2) The large influx of indentured Chinese mine labourers who lived and worked on the Reef during the period 1904 to 1910.

(3) The scarcity of official population statistics for the Chinese community due to administrative policies and political ideology.

2.3.1 Chinese immigration statistics (c.1900-1911)

2.3.1.1 The Chinese at the Cape

Cronje (1946:30) cited the Cape Colony Census report of 1891 that there were 215 Chinese who were 'all males' in the Cape Colony. Within a decade, The Cape Colony's Immigration Act, Act No. 47 of 1902 was in operation. The main clauses were patterned after The Natal Immigration Restriction Act, Act No. 1 of 1897. The emphasis in both Acts was placed upon the requirement of language efficiency in a European tongue and proof for visible support on the part of the immigrant.

The second immigration-related Act which was passed two years later, was known as The Chinese Exclusion Act, No.37 of 1904. When this Act was passed, the Chinese population in the Cape Colony had increased to 1 366 males and 14 females (Cronje 1946:31).

The increase in the Chinese population in the Colony represented an astounding 541% increase between 1891 and 1904. This significant increase in the Chinese population in the Cape Colony was due to the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1886. It was very likely that many of the Chinese in the Cape were *en route* to the Rand. The enhanced vigilance caused the influx of Asian immigrants, both Indian and Chinese, to make far greater use of

the Cape ports of Cape Town, East London and Port Elizabeth from approximately 1900 to 1906 (Pineo 1985:157).

The Cape Colony introduced The Immigration Act, Act No.47 of 1902 which followed the basic provisions of the Natal legislation of 1897. Emphasis was also placed upon the requirement of language efficiency in a European tongue and proof for visible support on the part of the immigrant.

In the amended version of The Chinese Exclusion Act, which was designated as Law No.15 of 1906, provision was made in Article 1 of Law 15 for a Chinese person in possession of a valid Certificate of Exemption, to apply for a permit to visit China or another Eastern country and to return to the Cape Colony.

The reference to Chinese who were British subjects more than likely applied to Chinese from Hong Kong, which was a British Colony. Stringent measures were also incorporated into the 1906 Act which prohibited any person either letting or giving occupation of any shop, store or building to any Chinese. Such action constituted an offence and was punishable under law. Even providing transport for a Chinese person into the Colony was strictly prohibited, as indicated in Section 3 of that Act:

> The master, owner and charterer of any ship, or the owner or driver of any vehicle in which any Chinaman enters this Colony with his knowledge, is liable to a joint penalty.

The effectiveness of this law may be gauged from the drastic decrease in the Chinese population in the Cape Colony after the passing of The Immigration Act, Act No.47 of 1902 and the Chinese Exclusion Act, No.37 of 1904 as further amended in Law No.15 of 1906. From a total Chinese population of 1380 in 1904, the number had dropped to 823 in 1911 (Cronje 1946:31).

An acceptable reason is furnished by Cronje (1946:31) for the introduction of the two rather harsh Acts against the Chinese of the Cape Colony. He linked the coming of the indentured Chinese labourers for the Reef gold mines with the 'onrustigheid oor die Chinese immigrante'. It appears that the Cape Colonial Government suffered from a bout of sinophobia. However, during the period 1904 to 1932, thirty-three exemptions were granted under the provisions of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904 (Cape Archives Depot: Computer printout on 'Chinese':26.5.1982).

2.3.1.2 The Chinese in the Orange Free State

The Free State Republic appeared to have taken a harsh line against the Asians. In 1890, the Law to Provide against the Influx of Asiatics was promulgated. Article One stated,

> Geen Arabier, Chinees, Koelie of Andere Aziatische Kleurling sal zich met ter woon in dezen Staat kunnen vestigen, of alhier voor langer dan twee maanden kunnen vertoeven zonder vooraf verlof van den Staatspresident te hebben verkregen.

Article 8 specifically prohibits the granting of any freedom of trade or the right to farm. Article 10 required any Asiatic who may have been established or living in the Republic of the Orange Free State prior to the promulgation of this law, to submit to all its provisions within twelve months of its promulgation. Failure to observe the provisions of the year's grace would result in the deportation without compensation of the guilty party. Provision was made that an Asiatic person already resident in the Free State at the time of the promulgation of the law of 1890, could apply to remain in the Republic but only as a domestic servant or as an employee of a White person or a company.

Of the four provinces, the forgone information clearly indicates that the Orange Free State not only legislated but also practised

the anti-Asiatic laws most succesfully until the introduction of State President Botha's reforms of the late 1980s. Asians have since been allowed to settle and to trade in the Free State as from 1987.

2.3.1.3 The Chinese in the Transvaal

The Chinese community in the Transvaal consisted of 981 immigrants from the southern provinces of China who had during the last three decades of the nineteenth century settled in South Africa. All but twenty-nine of this number were resident in Johannesburg (Richardson 1978:73-74).

The South African Republic (the Transvaal) enacted Law No.3 of 1885 and its amended version as published on 26 January 1887. This law had as one of its ultimate purposes the prevention of members of the native races of Asia from owning fixed property in the Transvaal with the exception of certain locations as laid down by the government. The other important purpose of this law was to prevent the granting of citizenship to any Asian in the South African Republic.

According to the First Volksraad Resolution, 1893, Art.1353, which had as its title, 'Coolies and Chinamen', Chinese people were especially discriminated against in that they were required to carry a special pass, fixed with a 25 pound sterling stamp. This pass was issued by the local magistrate or the relevant Mining Commissioner. Every Chinese person was obliged to produce this pass on demand by a police or judicial officer, failing which the Chinese person could be arrested and punished or banished from the Transvaal in case of a second default of this nature.

Certain provisions of law No.3 of 1885 were introduced into the Colony of Natal's Proclamation No.9 of 1903, which law enabled the colony to annex certain areas from the South African Republic

in order to facilitate the administration of these annexed districts. The Peace Preservation Ordinance, Ordinance No.38 of 1902 of the Transvaal Colony, expressly forbade any entry of unlawful Asian immigrants.

The present 'Chinatown' at the western end of Commissioner Street in Johannesburg constitutes part of the former Ferreiras, a working-class suburb where different race groups lived. A population analysis drawn up in 1904 of the suburb listed the different ethnic groups and the number of each group as follows: 288 Indians, 58 Syrians, 165 Chinese, 295 Cape Coloureds, 75 Blacks and 929 Whites (Swan 1985:113).

From 1904 to 1910 many thousands of other Chinese lived in the Transvaal but on mine compounds scattered all over the Reef. Their free time and travel facilities were strictly controlled and limited by the authorities for fear of desertion.

No study has yet been undertaken of the relationship which may have existed between the local Chinese and the thousands of indentured miners. That some contact was made by individual miners with members of the local Chinese community must of necessity not be ruled out. Certain limitations precluded much contact between the miners and the local Chinese community. The different dialects which many of the miners spoke which were not understood by the largely southern China immigrants must be considered as one such limiting factor. The present researcher suggests the untested thesis for further study, namely that the local Chinese considered the miners as belonging to a lower social stratum when compared with themselves.

The following section will outline the legislative preparation with which the Governments of China and Great Britain were involved in order to allow for the indenture of labourers from China. The important contribution of the miners to the economic recovery of the Transvaal will not be dealt with in this study.

2.3.1.3.1 The Legislative preparation in the Transvaal for the Indenture of Chinese miners

After the South African War (1899-1902) the mining industry and the British Colonial authorities in the Transvaal felt the urgent need to revive the mining industry as part of the national reconstruction programme. Due to the lack of Black labour, it was decided to make use of Chinese indentured labour.

The provision for such an experiment was conveniently contained in The Convention of Peking signed between Britain and Imperial China in 1860. Clause No.5 contained the Emigration provisions:

> As soon as the ratifications of the Treaty of 1858 shall have been exchanged, His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China will, by decree, command the high authorities of every province to proclaim throughout their jurisdiction that Chinese choosing to take service in British colonies or other parts beyond the sea are at perfect liberty to enter into engagements with British subjects for that purpose, and to ship themselves and their families on board any British vessel at any of the open ports of China; also that the high authorities aforesaid shall in concert with Her Britannic Majesty's Representative in China frame such Regulations for the protection of Chinese emigrating as above as the circumstances of the different open ports may demand.

Forty-four years before the first Chinese miner set foot on South African soil, the Earl of Elgin had included the above emigration clause as part of the Convention of Peking. This Convention was in fact a ratification of the Treaty of Tientsin of 1856 which followed the 'Arrow Lorcha' War, and a further treaty signed

between the British and the Chinese in 1858. The non-observance of the 1856 and 1858 treaties by the parties led to further confrontations. The signing of the Peking Convention brought to a conclusion the so-called 'Opium Wars'.

The inter-governmental labour agreement was therefore established well in advance and the necessary legislation in South Africa was processed.
Other laws were framed to enable the mining authorities to enter into a contractual relationship with the Chinese Imperial Government and its subjects who wished to be indentured.

The first piece of legislation, The Labour Importation Ordinance 1904 also referred to as Ordinance No. 17 of 1904, was dated 11 February 1904. It was assented to by the Governor, Lord Milner on the same day in Pretoria. The purpose of this Ordinance was to regulate the introduction into the Transvaal of unskilled 'non-European labour'.

Government Notice No.771 of 1904 was issued on the same day with the publication of the Labour Importation Ordinance. This Government Notice contained the regulations for the introduction of Chinese labourers for the Rand mines.

The complemental Government Notice No.778 of 1904, dated 30 May 1904, contained instructions issued by the Lieutenant Governor to Transvaal emigration agents in China in connection with the provisions of the Labour Importation Ordinance, 1904. The Sino-British diplomatic discussions on the Chinese emigrant labour question were finalised in the document formally known as The Convention Between The United Kindom and China Respecting The Employment of Chinese Labour In British Colonies and Protectorates. It was however also known for convenience sake as The Chinese Labour Convention (Africa. No.6 1904) (C.d. 1956). In South Africa the same document was called The Labour Importation Ordinance 1904.

This bold labour recruitment experiment for the Transvaal necessitated the use of Durban as the disembarkation point for the many thousands of Chinese who were expected to arrive in South Africa.

2.3.1.3.2 Legislative preparations in Natal for the indentured Chinese miners

In addition to the Natal Immigration Restriction Act, Act No.1 of 1897, the Natal Colonial government also saw fit to pass The Transit Immigrant (Chinese) Act, No.7 of 1904.

This was a special Act passed to cater for the non-resident, non-visiting Chinese indentured workers destined for the Rand mines. The Act attempted to ensure that no Chinese miners became settlers in Natal. They were to be housed at a compound at Jacobs in the Durban area before entraining for the Transvaal. Upon the expiration of their services on the Reef mines, they were again sent by train to Jacobs from where they were taken to their vessels for their return journey to China.

The available statistics for the Chinese miners indicate the measure of success which this labour experiment enjoyed. The total number of Chinese who embarked from the various Chinese ports numbered 63 938 during the period 1904-7. Deaths and desertion en route totalled 243. The total number of Chinese landed at Durban during the initial four year period was 63 695. Thirty six Chinese died while at Durban and 363 were returned to China direct from Durban for various reasons. The total number of miners distributed to the mines from Durban was therefore 63 296. The so-called 'wastage rate of men' amounted to 642 or 1% (Tvl Chamber of Mines, Annual Report: 1909).

2.3.1.4 The Chinese in Natal

The Colony of Natal has traditionally not attracted a large number of Chinese settlers. Definitive statistics are not available to indicate the size of the Natal Chinese community from 1900 to 1911 except for the figure of 163 which the Asiatic Inquiry Commission supplied (Asiatic Inquiry Commission Report 1921: paragraphs 7, 216).

Figures are however available for the entry and departure of the Chinese from 1899-1909. In 1899, twelve entered Natal while none left the colony. The following year saw twenty-three entering and again none leaving. In 1901, sixteen arrived and twenty left the country. In 1902, only two entered while thirteen left via Durban. Thirteen entered Natal in 1903 and eleven left that year (Colony of Natal Blue Books 1899-1903).

It appears that quite a large number of passengers, including transit passengers, visitors, immigrants and prohibited immigrants, called at Durban. The Colony had introduced the Immigration Restriction Act (Natal) No. 1 of 1897. From then onwards, only those with 'former domicile' were allowed to disembark at Durban. From 1904 to 1909 only 211 passes were issued to individuals who wished to visit the city of Durban. For the same period only one pass was issued by the port authorities for a passenger to visit Johannesburg (Colony of Natal Blue Books 1904-1909).

The records of the Durban Harbour authorities which were kept in accordance with the provisions of the Immigration Restriction Act (Natal) No.1 of 1897, contained the following information for the years 1899 to 1909:

In 1899, a total number of 156 passengers docked at Durban. Of this number only seventeen passengers who were formerly domiciled in Natal, were allowed to land. The following year saw 117

passengers arrive at Durban. Of this number thirteen Chinese were allowed to land as they were formerly domiciled in Natal. In 1901 a large number of passengers arrived, and twenty Chinese and Japanese were allowed to land as formerly domiciled passengers. In this instance, no distinction was drawn between Japanese and Chinese. The statistics for the following two years again indicated the number of Chinese who were allowed to land. In 1902, a total of eighty-two passengers arrived at Durban. Of these fourteen were Chinese who were allowed to land. The following year, out of a number of 257 passengers twenty-one were Chinese who possessed the qualifications to land. Unfortunately the statistics from 1905 to 1909 made no distiction between Chinese and other races (Colony of Natal Blue Books 1899-1909), and therefore the figures would serve no useful purpose for this study.

With the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act, provision was also made for the issuance of visiting and embarkation passes to foreigners and immigrants either to visit Natal or to pass through Natal to the Transvaal and elsewhere. Part III of the Act made provision for such passes to be

> ...issuable to persons ineligible as immigrants (to Natal) enabling them to enter and remain in the Colony for 21 days, or to embark at the port, or to pass through the Colony to the Transvaal or elsewhere....
>
> (Colony of Natal Blue Book 1897)

Such passes cost their bearers a considerable amount. A visiting pass cost ten pounds for the wife and children. An embarkation pass cost ten pounds per adult, and five pounds each child under sixteen years of age.

From 1897 to 1903, no indication of the Chinese as an ethnic group appears in the records of the issuance of such passes. From 1904 to 1909, however, the following statistics clearly show

the movements of Chinese immigrants, other than miners, to Johannesburg:

In 1904, twelve visiting passes were issued for Durban while forty-eight passes were issued for embarkation for Johannesburg. In 1905, 114 visiting passes for Durban city were issued while eight were issued for embarkation for Johannesburg. The following year saw the issue of seventeen embarkation passes for Johannesburg. In 1907, twenty-four Durban city visiting passes were issued and twenty-six Johannesburg embarkation passes were issued. In 1908 one visiting pass was issued for Johannesburg in addition to the forty embarkation passes for that city. Thirty one passes for visitors to Durban were issued in 1908.

In 1909 a total of thirty visiting passes were issued for Durban and thirty-one embarkation passes were issued to Chinese for Johannesburg.

The total number of Chinese granted embarkation passes to travel via Natal to the Transvaal during the period 1904-1909 was 170 (Colony of Natal Blue Books 1904-1909).

An almost insurmountable problem faces the researcher when it comes to the question of the Chinese as far as official data is concerned. In some instances, the records clearly reflect the ethnicity of the applicants while in others they are simply included with other 'Asians'.

The researcher is of the opinion that it would be naive to think that ALL the passes issued to visitors were indeed properly used and returned to the Natal port authorities within the prescribed period of twenty-one days. It was more than likely that a number of 'visitors' made their way into the interior and stayed there without the necessary documents.

In order to help ascertain the number of Chinese in South Africa

up to and including the date of Union in 1910, one needs to calculate the number of Chinese who set sail from Mauritius for South African ports. From 1880 to 1900, 2 068 Chinese travelled from Mauritius to South Africa. From 1901 to 1930, only an additional 704 Chinese travelled from Port Louis in Mauritius to South Africa.

It is by no means certain how many of the Mauritian immigrants were allowed to land in South Africa as a number of immigration and influx control measures were adopted by the various local governments operating then in the different colonies. For example the Colony of Natal had a law, No.23 of 1874 which only allowed conferment of naturalization upon persons of European birth or descent (Colonial Secretary's Office CSO 1078, 1886/1881 (12,12a,13)).

A further restrictive law was introduced in the Natal Colony in 1897 and was promulgated as the Immigration Restriction Act, Act No.1 of 1897. In the process the law also made provision for the establishment of the Immigration Restriction Department.

The Colonial Secretary was presented with a test case soon after the promulgation of this Act. A request from a Mr. W. Ketcher for permission to employ two Chinese men-servants from Mauritius was conveyed by his legal representatives to the Colonial Secretary at Pietermaritzburg on the 27 July 1897 (Colonial Secretary's Office CSO 1524, 1897/5126 (1)).

The reply, dated the 28 July 1897 stated, inter alia,

> ...I have the honour to inform you that the Immigration Restriction Act expressly provides against the introduction of this class of immigrant.
>
> (Colonial Secretary's Office CSO 1524,1897/5126 2))

Additional information on the correspondence at an administrative level relating to the implementation of broad policy decisions regarding Chinese immigration to Natal may be obtained from the Natal Archives Depot in Pietermaritzburg (vide: Colonial Secretary's Office (CSO): 1842-1919; Natal Government's views on the question of Chinese immigration: 'Government House' (GH):1845-1910; Correspondence regarding the prohibition of Chinese immigrants from landing in Natal: 'Immigration Restriction Department'(IRD): 1897-1912).

The available statistics of the Chinese traffic between South African ports and Port Louis in Mauritius are not easy to analyse due to many unknown factors as well as administrative inconsistencies on the part of the authorities.

The records which Mauritian-based scholar Ly-Tio-Fane Pineo consulted in Mauritius contain much useful data not available in South Africa. The present researcher acknowledges his indebtedness to her in the use of her statistical information in the following section.

2.3.2 Chinese immigration statistics (c.1911-1950s)

During the first eleven years of the Union of South Africa, 120 Chinese left South African ports and disembarked at Port Louis in Mauritius. The records do not indicate whether they were emigrants from South Africa or whether they were en route to the Far East. During the same period (1900-1911) 579 Chinese arrived at South African ports from Mauritius (Pineo 1985:113).

In order to arrive at a working figure for the number of Chinese living in South Africa round about 1911, one needs to add the approximately 2 000 Chinese who came to South Africa from Mauritius during the period 1888-1898 (Pineo 1985:219).

The tension which developed between the British and the

Afrikaners during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the resultant war which was declared in October 1899 virtually brought to a close the era of large scale Chinese immigration from Mauritius. From 1900-1930, 143 arrivals at South African ports from Mauritius were recorded (Pineo 1985:257).

According to the 1911 South African census, 804 Chinese males and nineteen Chinese females were enumerated in the Cape (Cronje 1946:31).

Two other pieces of legislation caused great upheavals in the Asian communities in the Transvaal and which further restricted Asian immigration. These were the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, No.2 of 1907 and The Asiatics Registration Amendment Act, Act No.36 of 1908. The former legislation was passed in order to amend Law No.3 of 1885. The 1907 Act required identification by finger prints of all Asians, their registration and issuance of such certificates of registration, and the onus to produce their certificates of registration to any officer of law or any other authorized person. The latter legislation was promulgated with special emphasis on the removal of Asians from the Transvaal Colony, who were without the relevant Transvaal Asiatic Registration Certificate.

Even though the new measures were unpopular, they nevertheless yielded the names of 1345 Chinese males during the period 1907-1911 in the Transvaal (Asiatic Inquiry Commission Report 1921). The figure of 1 345 seems to have been fairly close to the figure of 1 300 quoted by Gandhi (Indian Opinion 7 Dec 1907) at a funeral service of Chow Kwai, who for the sake of conscience, committed suicide in November 1907. Chow Kwai claimed in a suicide note dated the 10 November to the chairman of the Chinese Association, Mr Leung Quinn that he (Chow Kwai) had been misled by his employer concerning the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, Act No.2 of 1907. He had had himself finger-printed and afterwards realized the shame he had brought upon himself and his fellow

countrymen.

Three years after the Union of South Africa had been affected, The Immigrants Regulation Act, 22 of 1913 was introduced with the purpose of further restricting the flow of Asians into South Africa. The following were some of the cases which Chinese immigrants brought against the Immigration authorities: Pong Ching v Principal Immigration Officer. 1916 (22/1913. sec.19(2)), Ah Sing v Minister of the Interior. 1919 (22/1913. sec.22, Lai Shee v Commissioner for Immigration, 1931 TPD 322,(22/1913.sec21) and Chow See v Minister of the Interior and Another, 1951 (3)S.A.848(c) (Minister of the Interior 1916-1919, 1931, 1951: CAD 790004223 BNS).

The census conducted by the Union Government in 1918 was only for the White community with the result that statistics relating to other race groups from 1912 to 1920 are incomplete. Whites-only census exercises were also conducted in 1926, 1931 and again in 1941. This bureaucratic practice has naturally resulted in the existence of many annoying statistical gaps.

The approximated figures supplied by the Asiatic Inquiry hearings of 1921 indicated that 1 000 Chinese lived in each of the two larger provinces, namely the Transvaal and the Cape, while 163 lived in Natal (Asiatic Inquiry Commission Report 1921: paragraphs 7 & 216).

The 1921 Union census indicated that a total of 1 409 Chinese were born in China. Of these 1 249 were males and 160 were females. The provincial distribution of the Chinese was as follows: 732 in the Cape, 108 in Natal, 988 in the Transvaal and none in the Orange Free State. The grand total of 1 828 consisted of 1 487 males and 341 females. The difference between the final figure and the figure indicating China as the birthplace of 1 409 would leave 419 as inclusive of those born in South Africa.

An interesting pattern of growth is evident when one compares the census figures of 1 828 with the approximated figure of 2 163 (Asiatic Inquiry Commission Report of 1921).
The total increase in the community over a period of ten years was a mere 335 persons, or an annual increase of 3.35 (1,8%) persons per annum.

The Asiatic Population of the Union: A statistical survey (1924) furnished useful information on the immigration pattern of Chinese to South Africa during the period 1921 to the first half of 1924. A total of 148 'new arrivals' were registered, with sixty during 1921, twenty-one in 1922, fifty-one in 1923 and sixteen up to the middle of 1924. It was however not a one-way traffic of Chinese wishing to settle in South Africa. A significant number also decided to leave South Africa permanently. During 1921 the number was forty-six, in 1922 it was twelve. The following year saw twenty-two leave the country, and eight up to the middle of 1924. Thus a total of eighty-eight left the country in three and a half years. The total number of Chinese who arrived in South Africa during the period 1921-mid 1924 was 356 while the total number who departed stood at 658.

During the four-year period, there was a net gain of sixty Chinese immigrants to South Africa, a figure hardly sufficient to cause undue concern to the Union government.

Many Chinese travelled frequently between the Far East and South Africa. This may be deduced from the arrival and departure figures of this period. According to the 1921 census, the Chinese community was 1828 strong. With 658 departing for China during the four-year period, and only eighty-eight registering their 'permanent departures', the balance of 570 departures constitute 31,18% of the total community who returned to China for a visit or for some other reasons but who were returning to South Africa at some future date. The eighty-eight who were 'permanent departures' constituted only 4.81% of the total South

African Chinese population.

As the 1926 census was another 'Whites only' census, certain statistics pertaining to the Chinese have had to be culled from other sources for the period 1925-1929.

During this five year period a total of 333 Chinese immigrants arrived in the country while a total of eighty-eight permanent residents departed its shores. This yielded a net gain of 250 Chinese immigrants to South Africa over a period of five years. The total of 333 immigrants arrived in the following numbers: In 1925 only forty-four arrived while the following year registered fifty-nine. In 1927 a substantialy larger number of ninety-four came but in 1928 a significant drop occurred with the arrival of forty-eight immigrants. A significant rise to eighty-eight was recorded for 1929.

Eighty-eight permanent residents left the country in the following chronological pattern: 1925 - twelve, 1926 - nineteen, 1927 - twenty-one, 1928 - sixteen and 1929 - fifteen (Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa...1930).

The 'Mauritian connection', which served as a feeder-source of Chinese immigration to South Africa at the turn of the twentieth century and right into the mid-1920s, had come to a grinding halt after 1923, when only two immigrants arrived at Cape Town, fourteen at Port Elizabeth and two at East London from Port Louis. During the next seven years, only two more immigrants travelled from Mauritius to Cape Town in 1927 (Pineo 1985:257).

The 1931 and 1941 censuses excluded all non-white races. The 1936 census however included all the races. However, other sources have also been consulted in order to gain a demographical picture of the Chinese in South Africa from 1930s to the late 1940s.

The 1936 census indicated that 1 648 Asians were born in China

and that 2 332 Asians spoke Chinese as their home language. If one takes into account the traditional close family ties in the Chinese community, especially before English and Afrikaans became as widely used as at present, it will be fair to expect that almost all children born of parents from China also spoke Chinese. Thus it is possible that the 2 332 figure should be considered as conservatively low, as some families may not have used Chinese as a home language where one parent may have been a non-Chinese. This contention is borne out when the following statistics are considered.

When one compares the figure 2 332 as those who used Chinese as their home language and the actual Chinese population 2 994 as recorded in the 1936 census, the difference of 612 (20,78%) indicates a large number of Chinese who had already become 'Westernised' as far as the use of their mother-tongue was concerned.

Apart from the possibility of an inter-racial marriage not being conducive to the use of Chinese as a language at home, the Government and private schools then available to the Chinese would have inadvertently encouraged the tendency for the diminishing use of the Chinese language in the community.

T Sung referred to the Chinese population in South Africa as numbering 'only about 4 000' when he was interviewed by the Press soon after he took office as the newly-appointed Consul-General in South Africa for the Republic of China early in January 1939 (The Star 17 January 1939).

The 1951 census indicated that the total number of Asians who spoke Chinese as their home language totalled 4 738. When this figure is compared with 2 108 which represents the total Asians born in China, the large difference of 2 630 needs some explanation.

The establishment of various Chinese schools during the late 1920s and the late 1940s in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, Kliptown, Vereeniging and Port Elizabeth will definitely have made some difference to the number of Chinese who would use Chinese as their home language. It is also to be expected that the additional twenty-five to thirty immigrants from China per year, from 1936 to 1951 also contributed to the greater use of the Chinese language. It has further been calculated that between 1921 and 1951, approximately twenty-five to thirty Chinese immigrants per annum entered South Africa and that the annual increase by immigration over the fifteen year period, from 1936 to 1951 averaged a high 30,6% (Sabra 1969 Memorandum/1).

The Chinese population in South Africa during the first half of the twentieth century was relatively insignificant as far as numbers go. The discovery of diamonds at Kimberley and gold on the Reef initially attracted many of the Chinese to South Africa. The possibility of establishing businesses was also an important reason which brought many of the immigrants.

They came from China, a few from Madagascar, but many came from Mauritius where a large number of Chinese had established themselves since 1831. While 36 836 Chinese arrived at Port Louis from either China or Singapore from 1880-1930, 2 772 Chinese had emigrated from Mauritius to South Africa during that same period (Pineo 1985:113).

The pattern of Chinese immigration to South Africa from 1900 to 1950 has not been an easy one to trace, nor has it been easy to obtain or to verify all the statistics used in this research.

Another researcher experienced a similar set of frustrations as may be sensed in her remarks,

> Statistics relating to the Chinese are notoriously unreliable, the derivation of accurate figures from census data, let alone

> from any other source, being a virtual impossibility.
>
> (Smedley 1980:20)

A number of reasons may be offered for this state of affairs. Historically, relatively few Chinese came to the Cape during the era of the V.O.C. Those who were at the Cape were classified as either 'black' or 'Asiatic'.

After Union, the first country-wide census conducted unfortunately did not specify the Chinese as a separate ethnic group. The residents of the country were enumerated as one of the following groups: European or White, Other than European or White, viz Bantu, Mixed and other Coloured, and Asiatics. This particular approach with regards the Chinese has been used since 1911.

Statistical data used in the more recent studies on the Chinese in South Africa quote the Sabra Memorandum dated 1969 which based its findings on indirect or inferred population data obtained from two major factors: (a) The number of Asians born in China and (b) The total number of Asians with Chinese as their home language.

The attempts to obtain reliable population data on the Chinese were further frustrated by the fact that the population censuses taken during the years 1918, 1926, 1931 and 1941 only took the White population groups into account. Furthermore, no general census was conducted from 1911 till 1921.

The laxity of border control, the inadequate or complete absence of maintaining records during the earlier part of South Africa's history, are other factors which have exacerbated this particular problem.

2.4 AN ASSESSMENT: CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO SOUTH AFRICA

2.4.1 Chinese migration due to national problems

Certain socio-economic reasons have been put forward earlier in this chapter to explain why so many Chinese emigrated to both far-flung and relatively nearby countries in the nineteenth century.

Chinese laws which forbade emigration were almost totally ignored even before 1850 by those who wished to take ship to settle elsewhere. The availability of ships did not constitute a difficulty as the twin problems of piracy and smuggling were common even then as evidenced in the widespread opium smuggling of that era.

Migration abroad increased after 1850 even before the signing of the 1860 Peking Conventions or the later Emigration Convention of 1866. While the Peking Convention with Britain for example was used as the basis for the importation of the indentured Chinese labourers to the South African gold mines in 1904-1910, the Emigration Convention of 1866 specifically enabled Britain and France to have the traditional Chinese ban on emigration abrogated. As a result, so-called Chinese coolie labour was recruited on a voluntary basis but only at ports where joint Chinese and European supervision could be exercised (Bain 1972:66).

2.4.2 The religious milieu in Southern China

The brief introduction to the religious milieu of Southern China from whence most of South Africa's Chinese came, indicated some Christian activity and the persistence of Chinese religious practices in spite of the many problems which beset the country at that time.

Evangelical missionaries rejoiced whenever converts submitted to baptism for it was a sure sign of their labour bearing tangible fruits. Their activities were many and varied and included ministry to the women, young people, lepers, blind beggers and even opium addicts.

The establishment of institutions of learning, included schools and colleges as well as medical training centres. This was in addition to their work of Bible translation and literature distribution.

Some missionaries were extremely zealous in their endeavours to reach the many thousands of Chinese who visited various temples at special times of the year. At such large gatherings, Christian literature was handed out or sold and open-air gatherings held at which the Christian faith was proclaimed in the local dialects.

The dire circumstances in the country also required missionaries to distribute food and other necessities of life. A few missionaries expressed concern that the physical needs of the people should not allow them to lose sight of their spiritual ministry to the Chinese, some of whom tended to become 'rice' Christians, which means exploiting the missionaries for 'hand outs'.

Some of the missionary reports showed commendable and unflinching faith in spite of unrest caused by war, anti-foreign and anti-Christian uprisings in some places. Such occasions did not dim their zeal in seizing opportunities to preach the gospel.

Independent Chinese Christians were also much involved in spreading their faith with remarkable success during the same period.

The Chinese continued in their own religious practices with the Christian faith hardly making an impression on the vast numbers of the people. The deep-rooted devotion to the traditional beliefs was noted by various missionaries in their reports. In the city of Nanching for example, forty eight temples were gutted by fire and over a thousand idols were also destroyed in the blaze. Within a few days, the citizens had commenced a public subscription which soon totalled more than 10 000 Mexican dollars for the rebuilding of the main temple.

A further indication of the strength of the traditional beliefs in South China were given by two missionaries who reported that 'thousands or ten thousands' of worshippers made their annual pilgrimage to a particular temple situated between the cities of Nanchang and Juichow.

From the foregoing examination, the south of China was a spiritually active area from which most of South Africa's Chinese originated. The following important question therefore has relevance for this study. How did emigration affect the veneration of the ancestors?

2.4.3 Emigration and the veneration of ancestors

The ready response is that emigration did in fact pose a number of problems to the traditionalists among the Chinese emigrants. This response is however dependent on a number of other questions: Did the emigrant to South Africa leave China with the intention of living permanently here? Or was the intention to leave China for a short period during which the breadwinner would be employed or be in business in order to build up his capital 'back home' and retire to China, having made his fortune in South Africa? This was in fact the attitude which many of the earlier emigrants had when they first came to South Africa. The later batch who came in the 1920s came rather to settle in South Africa permanently.

The youth in the Chinese community at present are mainly the third and fourth generation descendants of those who left China during the 1920s and 1940s (Yap 1977:9).

As far as the ancestral tablets were concerned, it was unlikely that such precious items were brought all the way to South Africa with the possibility of their being lost at sea or damaged in one way or another. It was far easier to let family members in China administer and observe the ritual involved in keeping such an item. On the other hand, some of the later settlers may well have brought their immediate ancestors' tablets with them. The evidence is inconclusive (Interview Mr YF 16.3.1989).

The availability of certain 'religious' items connected with ancestor worship would have posed a problem to any early settler who may have wished to observe the requisite ancestral rituals in South Africa. Where, for example, were the necessary paper grave money, or mock money and clothing to be bought in a strange land? What about the purchase of the important joss sticks which had to be used daily?

A number of options were open to the early immigrants. For example, they could have taken with them a large supply of the necessary religious paraphernalia or they could have had their requirements sent to them as and when their supplies ran low. A less likely possibility was that they could have attempted to manufacture their own ritual requirements, a very unlikely course of action, due to their lack of know-how, non-availability of the ingredients, or simply because of the deep-rooted reluctance to touch any death-related items unless it was utterly necessary.

The principle of supply and demand resulted in the establishment by a few astute entrepreneurs of import businesses to cater for these ritual and other special needs of the Chinese immigrant community. This was indeed the case in Johannesburg some decades

ago when companies such as Sui Hing Hong and Ho Sui were established. These direct importers of Chinese groceries also imported the cooking and eating utensils, reading and writing materials and the religious items used in the rites for ancestor veneration.

The ancestral spirits could have been ritually venerated as long as the tablet was present in South Africa even though the actual grave was in China. The spirits residing in the tablets are not subject to strictures of locality with regards to being kept within a particular distance from the grave (Freedman 1966:126).

The Chinese believe that the wooden tablets actually become the residence of the dead ancestors. It is for this reason that food, drink and joss sticks are offered in front of these tablets in whichever countries these tablets might be set up.

The Chinese beliefs relating to the life after death are dealt with at greater length in the following two chapters.

2.4.4 The emigrants' hopes, failures and legalised racism

All the Chinese immigrants came to South Africa with the hope and dream of building a better future for themselves and their families. Some came on a short-term basis, hoping to earn sufficient money in order to remit to their needy families 'back home'.

They sought opportunities elsewhere to re-establish themselves and to work towards a brighter future. The hardships they had endured in China had prepared them to tackle almost any menial task in order to make a living.

This state of mind enabled some unscrupulous men to engage in what can only be termed slave trade in transporting men, women and children to distant shores and to sell such bonded

individuals to corporations as cheap labour as occurred in 1854 (Broomhall 1982a:331-332, 1982b:183).

In South Africa it was the mining industry which was happy to use such cheap labour during the period 1904-1909. Close to 64 000 Chinese men indentured themselves to work as menial labourers on the Witwatersrand gold mines (S A Mining World November 1985:81).

The following pattern was usually followed by those who came as immigrants: some of them became domestic servants while others took on the role of the often derided laundrymen. Those with a little more capital established themselves in small family-run provision stores in order to eke out a living in the country of their adoption.

The Chinese immigrants were confronted with hostile legislation in every part of the country. Laws were enacted to limit their involvement in commerce and the localities where they may reside and even basic education for their children had to be provided by themselves.

Many of the immigrants failed in their efforts and were not ever able to return to China to see their families. Many died a lonely death and now lie buried in foreign soil without the traditional reverence shown to them by filial offsprings or clansmen. For example, when the last of the indentured miners left in March 1910, they took with them the ashes of their exhumed and cremated dead, packed in a dozen little tea-boxes (Forest 9.6.1980).

The graves of a number of miners have been traced by the writer at the Braamfontein cemetery. Their families were not as fortunate as some others who had the ashes of loved ones returned to China.

On the other hand many immigrants were successful in their business endeavours and became well established in their

respective fields. Their sons and daughters and their grand children have since taken their rightful places in the South African economic, industrial and other professional fields.

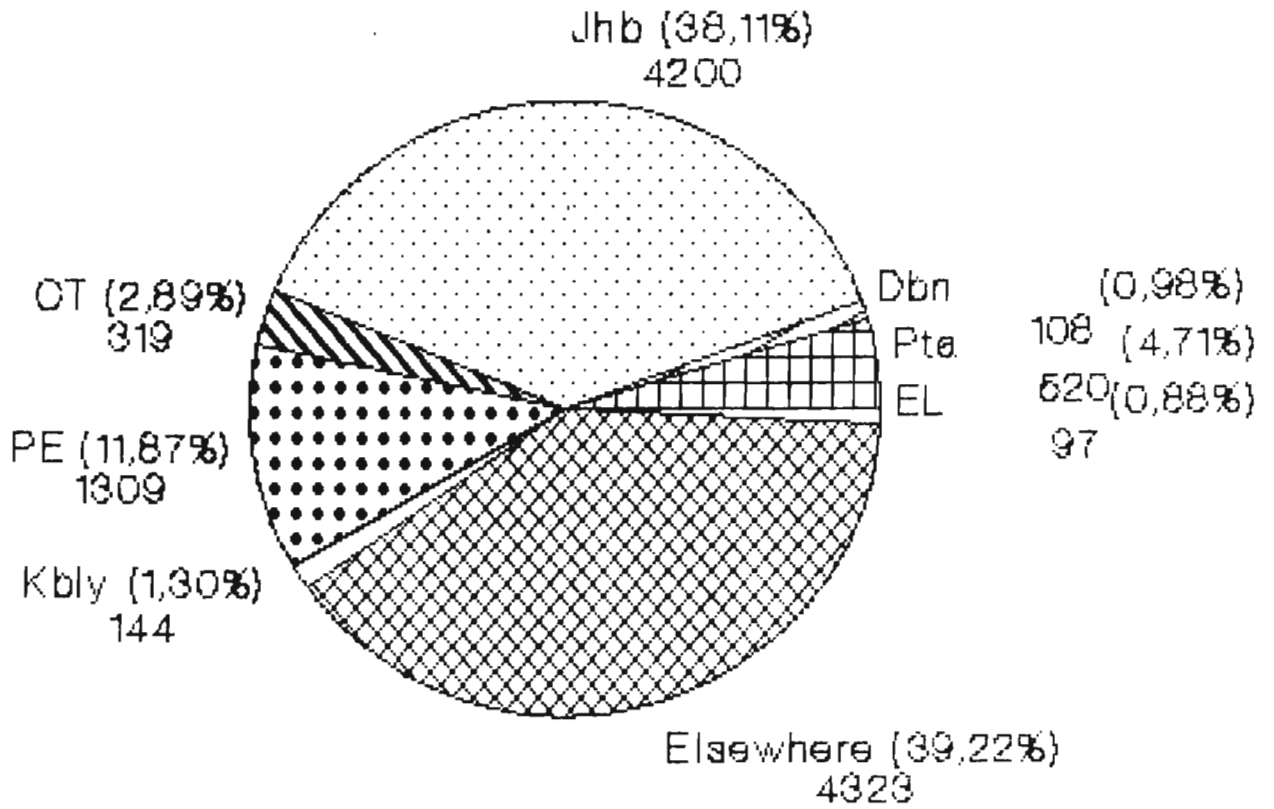
2.4.5 Statistics on the South African Chinese: 1989

The 1985 census rendered the following statistics on the Chinese in South Africa: Johannesburg - 4 200; Port Elizabeth - 1 309; Pretoria - 520; Cape Town - 319; Kimberley - 144; Durban - 108; East London 97; Other cities, towns and districts 4 323, making a grand total of 11 020.

During the past five years a growing number of Chinese from the Republic of China have come to South Africa to conduct business and to settle here. There are approximately 4 000 of them scattered mainly in the Transvaal and Natal, although they are to be found in the Cape and in the Orange Free State as well (Interview Mr W-J Hu, Consul-General of the Republic of China: 5 June 1989).

If the Chinese from the Republic of China are included with the South African Chinese, the total Chinese population in the country stands at 15 020 as at June 1989. This does not include the natural additions by birth within the local Chinese community since 1985, nor the decrease by death (vide: 65a).

S A Chinese Population
Total: 11020 (1985 census)



7 major cities: 80,77% (8897)

3.0 A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CHINESE RELIGION

3.1 THE NATURE OF CHINESE RELIGION

3.1.1 The historical development of Chinese religion

The development of Chinese religion may be divided into three stages, according to Chau (1967:20-33). The totemistic stage saw men using living and inanimate objects which ultimately became objects of worship at a basic level. In their more advanced stage of social and cultural development, men developed an awe and respect for nature, which led to worship. Shamanism and divination enabled ordinary man to communicate with these nature deities. The third stage developed alongside further cultural advancements. Human relationships and morality became the principles of his social order and blood ties resulted in sacrifices being offered in memory of parents. Chau believes that ancestor worship developed from these sacrifices of remembrance.

3.1.1.1 The purpose and the concept of religion

The Chinese practise religion according to the conviction that true religion ought to be not so much a matter for rational discussion but rather a direct expression in life, words and deeds. In other words, religion ought to be lived and not established by arguments. For the large majority of Chinese people, the purpose of religion is to produce a gentle, tolerant and enlightened temper (Radhakrishnan 1944:10).

Radhakrishnan's sentiment concerning Chinese and religion is borne out when one considers that the same attitude to life is also found in their approach to different belief systems.

The concept of religion was seen as a 'liberal' one by Hu (1934:79) who noted that the Chinese word for 'religion' is **chiao** (teaching) or 'a system of teaching'. To teach people to believe

in a particular deity is chiao: but to teach them how to behave towards other men is also a chiao. The Chinese do not make any distinction between theistic religions and the purely mortal knowledge of their wise men. The term chiao is therefore applied to both religion and philosophy. To the Chinese, teachings related to religions are merely one of the possible ways to bring about 'a gentle, tolerant and enlightened temper'.

The above liberal attitude has a direct bearing on the response by Chinese writers to the attempt by many Western scholars to label Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism as 'religions' without drawing a distinction between the historical philosophies and their subsequent religious development.

Fung (1948:1-3) pointed out that Confucianism was no more a religion than say Platonism or Aristotelianism. He conceded that it was true that the Four Books of Confucianism have been the 'Bible' of the Chinese people, but in them no story of creation and no mention of Heaven or Hell is to be found. As far as Taoism and Buddhism were concerned, he also noted that a distinction must be observed between the philosophies and the religions as some of the differences were in fact contradictory.

The general attitude of Chinese to religion is that all religions teach goodness and are therefore of equal worth. This perspective leads to a selection of what is good and applicable from all the religions presented to the Chinese. This response is considered as eclecticism and not synergism.

3.1.1.2 The Three Teachings

The three 'religions' most closely associated with the Chinese are Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism which are collectively known as the **San Chiao** (Three Teachings). Each of the teachings received imperial patronage at some or other stage in China's history. To the Chinese the San Chiao merged into one basic

teaching because each approach to life provided certain contributions to the whole which the others lacked.

It was only after the religious influence from the West had become more marked in China after the middle of the nineteenth century, that each Teaching established its own identity. Soothill (1923:13) designated the 1911 revolution as the period after which the San Chiao parted ways and established for themselves a religious identity similar to 'faiths' in the West. The term **tsung chiao** (religion) has since been adopted by the Chinese in order to accord with Western methods of classifications.

The Three Teachings have continued to provide a useful support for each other. The deficiency of Confucianism in the provision of a spiritual dimension beyond a calm stoicism, was supplied by the more spiritual approach of Buddhism. The indefiniteness of Confucius as touching upon life after death was met by the more definite Taoist dogma of immortality. The three systems of belief are therefore complimentary. Together they appear to make a fuller provision for the total needs of the Chinese person, enabling him to choose whichever form of religion might best meet the ritual requirements of the occasion.

This practical approach to religion has enabled the Three Teachings to become the 'three roads to the same destination' because they have been mutually penetrated, interrelated and partially identified with each other for the past 1500 years (Chan 1953:180-181).

3.1.1.3 Other descriptive terms for Chinese religions

Two other terms have also been coined in an attempt to create a descriptive name for the Chinese religions.
J J M de Groot's term 'Universism' was used by Kitagawa (1968:50) to describe the implicit metaphysical structure of the Chinese.

This cosmic-human, monistic world view held that the world was not created; the world IS. The world has no beginning or end, and time is a chain of ever-repeating seasons. In this sense, creation is a constant recreation of nature and man is an integral part of that nature.

It was Hu (1931:32) who first suggested the use of the term 'Siniticism' to refer to the native religion of the Chinese people. He indicated that such a combined religion dated back to time immemorial and that it included all such later phases of its development as Mohism, Confucianism as a state religion, and all the various stages of the Taoist religion.

The tendency towards a practice of inclusiveness as evidenced in the Chinese attitude to the Three Teachings may also be seen in their approach to other aspects of their religious life.

3.1.1.4 The creation of deities

The Chinese have created deities out of mythical heroes and even characters from classical novels. The establishment of such a multiplicity of beings for worship, has enabled the fertile Chinese mind to find or to create one or more divine beings to meet specific spiritual needs. The spirit-beings range from stellar, nature or deified-human gods, to spirits or demons belonging to the Buddhist or the Taoist pantheons.

This process of 'god-creation' has been part of Chinese religious practice for millenia and appears to be an ongoing process in the closing decades of the twentieth century.

According to Tong (1988:13), elements of religious phenomena which are psychologically primitive, traditional and syncretic are present in Taiwanese folk beliefs. He further suggests that a new pantheon is being created as historical figures as diverse as Jesus, Mohammed, Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek are accepted as

new gods in some Taiwanese beliefs.

3.1.2 The syncretistic nature of Chinese religion

3.1.2.1 Syncretistic practices during the Chou dynasty

The best known and perhaps the earliest example of syncretistic practice occurred during the early years of the Chou dynasty (1122-221 BC) when certain religious practices of the Shang people were incorporated into those of the Chou. The name of the chief Shang deity, **Ti** (Emperor) was changed to **Shang Ti**, (Emperor Above) when the rulers themselves assumed the title of Ti (Lee 1967:6). The Chou conquerors in turn changed the name of the chief Shang deity from Shang Ti to **T'ien**, (Heaven, God, Sky Deity). **Although the Chou people changed the name they retained the basic attributes of Shang Ti.**

The early belief that man possesses two souls may also be traced to the Shang period (1766-1122 BC). Belief in the dual-soul formed the basis of the later Chou ancestral cult which has since been a deeply-rooted religious feature of the Chinese people.

The Chou conquerors brought with them a highly developed patriarchal family system and also their cult of heaven worship. Their syncretistic spirit allowed them to adopt some of the Shang deities into their cult of Heaven. Such adopted deities were assigned as 'feudal lords' under their Sky Deity (Eberhard 1977:26). This particular feature was to have far-reaching effects on the development of later Chinese religious patterns especially in the form of a bureaucratic structure in their pantheon.

The rigid patriarchate of the Chou people also led to the further development of the Emperor's status as **T'ien Tze** (Son of Heaven). The Chous did not employ priests but shamans or augurs were used for specific magical rites. In accordance with the practice of

the people of the Steppes, the head of the family performed the religious rites at home. Further development of the cult of Heaven was later continued along this family model. This eventuated in the ruler being declared the Son of Heaven by a process of anthropomorphic extension to the relationship between man and the divine beings (Eberhard 1977:28).

3.1.2.2 Syncretistic practices during the Han dynasty

Further evidences of Chinese syncretism may be seen in the adoption of Buddhism which entered China during the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). The conversion of many Chinese to Buddhism gained momentum due to the effective work of Indian monks who visited China and the availability of authoritative Sanskrit texts procured by Chinese pilgrims. The two most famous pilgrims were Fa Hsien in the fourth century AD and Hsuan Tsang during the T'ang dynasty (618-906). It was during the T'ang period when this orginally Indian faith became fully accepted by the Chinese as part of their own culture (Mackerras 1971:34).

Chinese culture and religion were enriched by various aspects of Buddhism. One of the most striking examples of this process of cultural enrichment may be seen in the Indian stupa sinified into the typical Chinese-styled pagoda (NEBM 1986;9:s v 'Pagoda').

The chanting of mantras based on Buddhist scriptures is another widespread practice which the Chinese adopted.

Certain aspects of traditional Chinese beliefs relating to the after-life were also subjected to Buddhist influence. Prior to the introduction of this faith, the Chinese did not believe in reincarnation. Since the Han period however, the idea of reincarnation became firmly entrenched in the belief system and in fact in the language of the Chinese. For example, when Hakka Chinese are faced with serious problems, the common remark may well be used: 'I do not know what crimes I have committed in my

previous life!'

The possibility of a reincarnated existence is fully recognized in the Chinese view of the afterlife with its ten courts and eighteen hells in which the soul may be tried and punished before the cycle of rebirth is allowed to continue, according to the NLEOM (1968:398).

The doctrine of transmigration has however brought about a measure of confusion to some Chinese who do not wish to believe in the Buddhist form of after-life but prefer the Taoist heaven with its rewards. In order not to put the deceased soul's eternal welfare at stake, where possible, both Buddhist and Taoist priests are usually invited to share in the funerary ceremonies.

3.1.3 The social model in the Chinese pantheon

The social structure of traditional imperial Chinese society continues to provide a rich source of models upon which the Chinese pantheon is based even in the twentieth century. Human institutions which are used as paradigms are the family, the military establishment and the imperial bureaucracy. Numerous members of the Chinese pantheon are to be found operating on a parallel basis to their human counterparts (Wolf 1974:145).

Based on the imperial court procedures and patterns of behaviour, a strict status differential is maintained in the pantheon. Even modern pictorial representations of the members of the pantheon continue to be dressed in the classical Han fashion. According to the bureaucratic custom, each superior being is assisted and served by underlings. Titles used generally fall into two categories: official and familial. Examples of official titles include: the Jade Emperor, King Hsieh, General Fan, Commander-in-chief Kang. These personages are all considered as gods. The importance of the family unit is also reflected in the familial

titles which include the following examples: goddesses such as Queen Mother Wang, who is often referred to as **Wang mu niang niang**, Princess of the Jade Emperor, and Madame Cheng Huang. Other gods in the familial category include: Grandfather earth and Maiden Seven Stars (vide: NLEOM 1968:382).

The belief in the existence of evil spirits requires the corresponding belief that armies of good spirits need to do battle with them. Such armies require leadership typical of the traditional military hierarchy which includes the Commander-in-chief, generals and the lowly-ranked soldiers.

A P Wolf (1974:140-141) described the various types of deities as the **shih** (official) types of deities who are explicitly compared with the Imperial bureaucracy and the **fu** (saintly person) type of deities whose moral character and good works were the main reasons for their elevation to divinity.

Kuan Ti, the famous general who died in AD 219, was elevated to divinity during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) by imperial decree. This was clearly an instance of Euhemerism, so described after the Roman author Euhemerus who held that gods were deified heroes. The Chinese therefore possess a cult of deified heroes (Song 1980:42).

The varied responsibilities, traditionally assigned to each spirit being, might vary according to the geographical locality of the assignees. For example the protector god of Taiwan is known as Kai Tai Sheng Wang and that of the Hakka people from Kwangtung is called San Shan Kuo Wang. The protector god of Anshi, in the Fukien province is Ching Shui Tsu Shi (Tong 1988:9-15).

In the examination of the nature of Chinese religion, the syncretistic tendency of the Chinese was briefly considered. The admiration of historical and even fictitious persons, coupled

with their admiration of the Han period, with its rich heritage of bereaucracy and culture, are all elements which may be found in the social model upon which the Chinese pantheon is based.

The final aspect to be considered on the topic of the nature of Chinese religion will take into account how they viewed certain aspects of nature in their religion.

3.2 THE ROLE OF NATURE IN CHINESE RELIGION

Alongside the cult of the ancestors, the Chinese also worshipped other objects and forces of nature such as the mountains, rivers and the life-giving soil. Bodde (1981:133) believed that these objects and forces in nature were generally conceived of in abstract rather than in personified terms. According to him, even the supreme Chinese divinity T'ien very rapidly lost the anthropomorphic qualities and became for most people a purely ethical power. It is to the role of nature in Chinese religion that we now turn our attention.

3.2.1 Agricultural deities in Chinese religion

3.2.1.1 Man's dependence on nature

The agrarian tradition of the Chinese may have contributed to their acceptance of the worldview that man is not the most important creation in the cosmos. All of his agrarian efforts and in fact his very survival, were totally dependent on the powerful forces inherent in nature. The earth itself served as the source of all man's sustenance, with the aid of the sun and rain. The reality of his utter dependence on nature helped to formulate his perspectives in his philosophy, art, literature and religion.

3.2.1.2 The Earth Deity

This intimate relationship with the earth resulted in it being revered as divine, with a locus of worship especially erected to receive the homage of the people not only in countless villages, but also in the imperial cities. In the past the emperor ritually ploughed the earth and made special offerings to it at the commencement of the summer equinox.

As late as the 1970s Wolf (1974:53) found on the island of Taiwan that each village had a small shrine in the fields which housed the **Tu Ti** (Earth God) of that locality. These shrines exist in addition to temples dedicated to other deities. Temples dedicated to the Earth God are also found in cities and towns. According to Li (1978:63) even prior to the establishment of the first Chinese empire in the third century BC, the northern city of Lintzu witnessed the annual spring festival in honour of this deity. On that occasion all were dressed in their best and the city provided much entertainment, including songs, dances, dramas and acrobatics. The people from the countryside flocked to the city. The temple of the Earth God was perhaps the most important building in the city after the palaces. The temple was much used by the community for various activities. For example, victory after a war was reported to the God, with captured enemy commanders at times sacrificed in the temple. Floods and droughts were also reported to the God so that he could provide counsel and suggest remedies.

The importance of the earth gave rise to its worship by the people since the early times and has been traditionally included in the four-fold divine appellation **T'ien, Ti, Hsen, Ming** (Heaven, Earth, Spirit, Brightness).

Animals, however, were not worshipped by the Chinese even though the following twelve animals appear in the Chinese Buddhist-based zodiac: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep,

monkey, rooster, dog and boar. The totemic worship of animals does not feature in Chinese religion.

3.2.2 Stellar deities in Chinese religion

In common with other races, the Chinese have also been fascinated with the visible heavenly bodies. The ancient Chinese also believed that T'ien, the Supreme Deity, used portents such as eclipses to indicate its will to men. It was primarily for these two reasons that the Chinese were such keen star-gazers and why precise records were kept of special 'portents' including history's most ancient recording of Halley's comet by the Chinese (Needham 1959;3:431-433).

The Taoist practice of transposing religious personages or folk heroes into stellar deities has brought about a large number of divine beings associated with the astral bodies. This practice has continued to the present in the Taiwanese pantheon (Tong 1988:9-15).

Although the sun and the moon received imperial sacrifices, the common people had their own set of beliefs about them. Many people believed that the sun was at one time a cock which developed a human face as a reward because it followed the **Tao** (the Way). Sacrifices were made at the beginning of the year to the sun and also on its 'birthday'. Of the two celestial bodies, the moon is the recipient of worship more often than the sun. The festival of the moon is one of the three great annual Chinese feasts and is held on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, when the full moon of the autumn equinox appears (NLEOM 1968:384).

Although selected heavenly bodies may receive the worship of many Chinese, it is Heaven itself which has been both the subject of disputes as well as the object of worship since antiquity. The examination of this aspect of 'stellar worship' is of utmost importance as many of its concepts are related to the ancestral

cult of the Chinese.

3.2.3 The nature of Heaven in Chinese culture

3.2.3.1 The definition of Heaven

Is Heaven a deity, the sky, or a place to which the ancestors go? This is a fundamental question which affects much of Chinese religious and philosophical thought. Whatever the ultimate answer, man does live in tandem with Heaven, either as a dependent on Heaven as 'nature' or Heaven as a religious or philosophical entity. It is the content of that relationship which continues to occupy the minds of many writers on Chinese culture.

3.2.3.2 Heaven equated with Nature

In his examination of the relationship between man and Heaven, a clear demarcation was observed by the Confucianist Hsun Tzu (c.313-238 BC). He denied the existence of any moral connection between man and Heaven. To him, Heaven was nature and man was man (Chan e a 1969:118). His views on nature may also be seen in the following sentiments:

> Nature (Heaven) operates with constant regularity. It does not exist for the sake of (sage-emperor) Yao nor does it cease to exist because of (wicked king) Chieh. Respond to it with peace and order, and good fortune will result. Respond to it with disorder, and disaster will follow. If the foundations of living (agriculture and sericulture) are strengthened and are economically used, then Nature cannot bring impoverishments....
> Heaven has its seasons, earth has its wealth, and man has his government. This is how they are able to form a triad. To neglect (human

activities) which constitute man's part in the triad and put one's hope in those with which he forms a triad is indeed a mistake.

(Chan e a 1969:118-119)

The above excerpt indicates that Hsun Tzu refused to blame nature for man's laziness or indifference. He held the view that if people violated the Way and acted foolishly, Nature should not be expected to grant them good fortune. In this context, the Way referred to man's efforts in agriculture and sericulture. By extension, the Way also included matters such as flood control or the provision of sufficient grain in granaries in times of good harvests. The clear demarcation between Heaven and man as separate cosmic entities is very clear in his latter statement where he wrote of the triad. Hsun Tzu showed himself in his writings as one of the most rationalistic of Confucianists.

3.2.3.3 Heaven interpreted as Deity

Although Hsun Tzu equated Heaven with Nature, the term has other connotations in Chinese culture. That Heaven refers to the sky in the first instance is not doubted. The problems of interpretation centre on the religious and philosophical aspects of the word T'ien.

The pronouncements of Confucius on cultural matters is usually accepted as authoritative. On this particular issue however, Confucius' views have been interpreted differently by scholars. In order to ascertain the Confucian usage of the term, it is important that the pre-Confucian interpretations first be examined.

The assessment by Ching (1977:116) suggested that the concept of T'ien should be examined initially by examining the structure of the Chinese word itself. To her the word suggested a materialistic association or a sky-hierophany. On the ideograph

itself she said,

> ...it is allegedly derived from the picture of a man with a big head - also of anthropomorphic origin. In China's first lexicon... this ideogram is explained in terms of its two apparent components: 'one' and 'great', namely the 'One Great'. The word T'ien is present also in the oracle bone writings where it does not refer to any God. This happens only with the literature of a later period: that of the Chou period (1111-249 BC) or the Confucian Classics.

T'ien appeared to have been the God of the Chou people who were culturally and ethnically related to the Shangs. The fusion of the Ti and T'ien traditions evidently occurred during the Chou times, as the Lord on High also known as Heaven, became recognized by all as the Supreme Deity, Lord of other gods, spirits and deified ancestors called upon in prayer for blessings and approvals (Ching 1977:117).

On the other hand, Steele (1966;1:xx) indicated in the introduction to his translation of the I-Li that the supreme religious power was T'ien, who was worshipped as a personal God. In keeping with his strict interpretation that T'ien was to be equated with a personal God, he concluded that the emperor who was called T'ien Tze, should in fact be called the Son of God.

The concept of **T'ien Ming** (Mandate of Heaven) emerged early in the Chou dynasty. In essence Heaven's Mandate granted the ruler the moral authority to rule. Should the ruler fall from Heaven's favour because of personal immorality, neglect of proper ritual ceremonies or the neglect of proper government, Heaven would overtly indicate its disfavour by sending natural disasters and heavenly portents. T'ien Ming also meant Heaven's will, decree of Heaven, fate or destiny, according to Ching (1977:122).

3.2.3.4 Heaven a collective designation for ancestors

Bodde (1981:98) noted that Creel's view propounded the theory that the term may have originated as a collective designation for the ancestors of the Chou kings taken as a group and that the term later became the name for the realm above in which the ancestors are supposedly living. By affecting this change, an impersonal supernatural concept developed, very similar to the western concept of 'heaven'.

Day (1974:75) called Creel's hypothesis 'a matrix of ancient reaction to environment' which the growing governmental groups evolved into a 'T'ien cult' in which the regulative nature of the sky was used as a model for stable government. Day concurred with Creel that the more personalised 'Shang Ti' evolved with the progress and strengthening of an imperial rule while the Tu Ti worship was left to popular religion. The worship of Heaven, which was equated with the Supreme Ruler, became the exclusive object of worship in the state cult. This exclusive worship did not prevent the ordinary men, such as the herdsmen or the agriculturalists from continuing to regulate their activities according to their ancient customs.

3.2.3.5 Heaven equated with celestial inhabitants

Fung (1937;1:31) noted that originally Heaven meant the people who dwelt in the realm of the sky and that the Supreme ancestor Shang Ti who was also the first of the ancestral line, presided over the celestial inhabitants. Subsequently the Supreme ancestor became identified with T'ien. The latter designation is used in many senses, such as physical sky, providence which rules men's lives, nature, ethical law and also an anthropomorphic deity.

3.2.3.6 Heaven considered as impersonal

Stover (1974:205) did not regard T'ien as anything but a 'non-anthropomorphic' Sky God.

T'ien was interpreted by Creel (1962:50) as being a 'vaguely conceived moral force in the universe'.

The Chinese observed the regular rotation of the seasons, the predictibility of the movements of the heavenly bodies and reached the conclusions that the sky could be symbolically interpreted as orderliness and harmony, qualities which the Chinese sought to emulate in their social dealings with each other.

Soothill (1923: 124-129) held the view that T'ien represented the impersonal heaven and was not a personal god. He believed that it was T'ien whom the ordinary people worshipped in conjunction with Earth in the combination of **T'ien-Ti** (Heaven and Earth). Shang Ti, was the personal God to whom the Emperor sacrificed and to whom his worship was directed.

3.2.3.7 The Confucian view of Heaven

Some scholars have therefore argued for a deity status for Heaven, either as a personal deity to be worshipped by the emperor or an impersonal deity worshipped by the common man. The crucial question which needs to be addressed at this stage is whether Confucianism sees Heaven as a rational principle or as a deity.

Tsao (1958,1;3:39) defined and described T'ien as follows: 'It is a vague impersonal term which simply means an Ideal Order of things, the Rational Principle, the Realm of Ends'. He also equated the Platonic Ideal and the Christian Logos (Word) with the concept of T'ien.

The term T'ien in Confucianism has therefore been used in a number of ways. Having examined some of the views of some modern Western and Eastern sinologists, it is necessary to examine how Confucius himself used this term.

The local spirits were not as important to Confucius as Heaven. The following analect illustrates this point:

> Wang-sun Chia asked, "what would you say of the adage: Better to be on good terms with the spirit of the hearth, which cooks our food, than with the tutelary spirits, whom we never see"?
> "I disagree. Whoever offends Sky has no court of appeal...".
>
> (Ware 1955:31)

The **Lun Yu** (Analects) is collectively referred to by many people as the sayings of Confucius. The Lun Yu consists of a collection of ethical and moral queries raised by his students and the replies given by Confucius.

Analect 11:8 recorded that when Yen Yuan, a very close follower died, Confucius said, 'Alas! Heaven is destroying me! Heaven is destroying me' (Legge 1935:239)! Another Analect (5:12) noted that the way of Heaven was one of the topics on which Confucius was reluctant to speak (Legge 1935:177).

The Analects reflect the confidence which Confucius had in Heaven. In a sense he viewed his task of reforming society with an almost religious fervour. On one occasion when he and some of his followers were <u>en route</u> to the state of Ch'an, they passed through the state of Sung. They had stopped under a tree in order to practise ceremonies when a high official named Hwan T'ui caused the tree to be pulled down in order to injure those under it. His response to the attack was, 'Heaven produced the virtue

that is in me. Hwan T'ui- what can he do to me?' (Legge 1935:202). He had full confidence that Heaven understood him, according to Analect 14:37 (Legge 1935:288-289). Heaven was seen as rewarding men with riches and honours according to a person's humility towards his fellows (Ware 1955:77).

Confucius (Analect 16:8) taught that the superior man should be in awe of three things: the commands of Sky, important people and the words of sages. The petty man does not appreciate these three things (Ware 1955:107).

The attitudes towards T'ien found in Confucian scholars, may in fact be traced to an earlier period. The I-Li is of uncertain age, but it is considered as the forerunner of the later work known as the Ceremonial of the Chou dynasty. The original date assigned to these two works is the twelfth century BC. The famous Confucian scholar of the twelfth century AD, Chu Hsi, was of the opinion that the present I-Li is a fragment of the original, on which the Ceremonial of the Chou was based (Steele 1966;1:xii).

One of the many rituals dealt with in the I-Li related to that of 'capping' young men.

The 'capping' ritual marked the arrival of the young man at the marriageable age which was traditionally twenty, and fifteen for the girl, who at this age was 'pinned'. Being 'pinned' was a term which referred to her being presented with her personal hairpin. The capping prior to marriage presumed at least one earlier capping, sometimes at the age of fifteen or even earlier and the ceremony has been likened to the puberty rites similar to the Roman toga virilis (Steele 1966;1:260).

At the capping and the pinning ceremonies, girls and boys were given their 'style' or a name which replaced that which their parents gave them (Steele 1966;1:263).

The term 'Heaven' was used in the blessings at the third capping ceremony of aristocratic youth (I-Li II:15). The words of the blessing were:

> ...in this best of years, and most auspicious of months... Your kinsmen are all here to perfect this virtuous act. May your years be long, and Heaven's blessing attend you.
>
> (Steele 1966;1:14)

The blessing that is pronounced when the must is drunk, contains a wish for 'life everlasting'. 'Sweet must and strong, good meats, fine flavours. Take them reverently and offer them that you may confirm your good fortune, and receive the blessing of Heaven, and life everlasting' (Steele 1966;1:14). The term 'Heaven' also appears when the toast of pledging was made with the second and third cups of wine (Steele 1966;1:14-15).

The references from the I-Li predated Confucius and show that the term T'ien was already a recognised source of blessing to the individual.

3.2.3.8 The worship of Heaven

When and how was T'ien worshipped by the Emperors in the past? The ceremonial of T'ien worship occurred at the winter solstice and was performed upon an open circular, triple-tiered marble terrace. The round temple of the God of the universe which is still extant, stands within a circular wall north of the Altar of Heaven precints and contains the central tablet of Heaven and the tablets of the Emperor's ancestors. A raised path behind it is bordered by a marble balustrade and leads to a broad gateway. Here open bays reveal **Ch'i Mien-tien**, (the Hall of Annual Prayers) which is the largest of the temples in the complex. It is here on the occasion of the new year festival which heralds the beginning of Spring that the Emperors used to pray for favourable weather, for the seeds to thrive and for a good harvest to

be gathered throughout the land (Speiser 1965:636-639).

After he had ascended the three stages of the Altar of Heaven, he bowed to the ground before the fires lit 'in honour of the god' and there made his offerings which consisted of rolls of silk, jade disks, different types of meat and many kinds of libations (NLEOM 1968:382).

Gernet (1962:200-201) described the altar as about ten metres high and that it was approached by a stairway of seventy-two steps, built on four different levels, not including the top platform. This topmost level was approximately nineteen meters wide and had a place for libations to **T'ien** (the Emperor-on-High) and two places for libations to the August Earth, as well as places for offerings made to the first emperors of the dynasty. Sixteen niches in the uppermost of the altar's four levels were used for the sacrifices to the mythical emperors of the Five Colours, to the planets and to the 360 stars.

The official celebrant was the emperor who also performed the ordinary rites such as those observed on the day of the beginning of Spring, which occurs on approximately 5 February or when special prayers were offered for rain during droughts.

The cult had as its main objectives the continuity of the dynasty, the regulation of time and space and the attainment of peace and prosperity to the world. The cult addressed itself to Heaven, Earth and the Imperial ancestors.

The Emperor's ritualistic preparation for the worship of Heaven at the Altar of Heaven required his fasting and ritual cleansing. The cult also required the observance of complex regulations involving numbers, colours, dates, all of which had to be carefully blended with respect to their symbolic meanings by ritualists.

The imperial procession from one of the lustration halls, where he had spent the night, to the Altar of Heaven, was accompanied by much pomp and ceremony at dawn. The scene was deliberately managed to be simultaneously spectacular and formal.

The actual sacrifice required the slaughter and burning of an unblemished, one-coloured bullock on the small adjacent altar to the God of the Soil. This sacrifice was not a propitiary one, as in Judaism. It was a thanksgiving service, and eucharistic in nature, in which the Lord-on-High as well as the great dynastic ancestors and the hosts of heaven were thanked for blessings bestowed during the past year (Soothill 1923:232).

When the emperor reached the topmost platform which served as the Altar for the sacrifices to T'ien, he offered libations to Heaven, to the August Earth and finally to his ancestors. Jade tablets and ritual wine were presented to his ancestors. The inscriptions on the jade were read by him, after which he deposited the tablets in the interior of the altar. The drinking of the 'wine of happiness' brought to a conclusion the rites. After stepping down and changing into a different robe in a specially prepared structure, the emperor received the congratulations of his high officials who then watched him take his leave and return to his palace in a different chariot to the one in which he arrived. The ceremony was watched by people of all ranks from the aristocratic society but the common people were debarred from the ceremony (Gernet 1962:202).

3.2.3.9 Some suggestions to Heaven's identity

According to Eliade (1974:109) the Supreme Beings of primitive races as well as the Great Gods of the earliest civilizations of history, all display a connection with the sky, the air and meteorological happenings. Such Supreme Beings were considered as creators, good, eternal with the connotation of being 'old' and who were considered as the founders of the established order

and guardians of the law. These Beings or Sky Gods tended to lose their importance in the cults and ceased to continue to play leading roles. They have been replaced by other religious forces, such as the 'worship of ancestors,' spirits and gods of nature, fertility spirits and great goddesses. The more powerful forces which had conquered the Supreme Beings or Sky Gods always appear to dispense life or to represent fecundity. Even fear of the demons or the dead may be said to represent the threat to life and therefore the need to exorcise and neutralise such forces.

The task of discovering the true meaning of Heaven is therefore not easy, for it appears to be subject to numerous interpretations. It does not seem likely that this problem of interpretation will be resolved, for no certainty existed even from pre-Confucian times whether the term T'ien was used exclusively for a personal deity, a philosophical or rational principle, or a 'pantheistic deity' or a place to which the souls of ancestors retire.

The literary records which equate T'ien with a personal deity and a principle reflect the thinking of the educated elite as the uneducated peasants were not in a position to either record or argue the pros and the cons of their beliefs. The religious traditions maintained orally amongst the peasant class also contain an admixture of the foreign Buddhist beliefs as well as constant additions to the Chinese pantheon.

In spite of the difficulties outlined above, it was possible that the various interpretations of the term found favour simultaneously with members of the literati and with the peasants since the beginning of Chinese culture.

The interpretation that T'ien may well have been the Father-Creator image to the imperial 'Son of Heaven', creates the possible link between the concept of filiality to the original cult of the ancestor. This potential link will be considered in

the following section.

3.3 THE ORIGINS OF THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

3.3.1 Preliminary remarks

3.3.1.1 The nomenclature options for the cult

One of the questions which needs to be addressed at this stage of inquiry is whether the ancestral cult should be equated with 'ancestor worship' as has been done by some Christian writers on this subject. Liao (1972:117-134) for example uses the term 'ancestor worship' exclusively. Subsequent to the 1983 Taipei Consultation on the Christian Response to Ancestor Practices, the terms 'ancestor worship' and 'ancestor practices' were used interchangeably (Ro 1985: preface) in the papers which were subsequently published (vide: ch 1.1.3).

To use the terms 'ancestor worship' and 'ancestor practices' interchangeably seems unwarranted and inaccurate. This procedure does not take into account the fact that some people only observe ancestor remembrance rites and therefore find it offensive to be accused of actually 'worshipping' their **joe scene** (ancestors).

Tan (1979:9) classifies the Chinese concept of filial piety shown to the dead as necromancy and as having contact with evil spirits.

3.3.1.2 Animism and 'worship' in the cult

The question also arises whether the ancestral cult should be classified as animistic. The classical definition of this term denotes the attribution of spirit or soul to a human being, an inanimate object and the phenomena of nature (Pike 1951:19). One could argue, for example that the body in the grave is to all intents and purposes an inanimate object to which a life-force is

attributed by the descendants.

The equating of an animistic religious practice with ancestor worship raises the question of who actually receives one's worship? Furthermore, should the followers of animistic religious practices be called 'idolators' seeing that the worship is not directed to the Supreme Deity? Such a perspective will of necessity include the Roman Catholic Church which admits three types of worship: latria, the worship reserved for God alone, dulia, the secondary type of veneration given to saints and angels, and hyperdulia, a higher kind of veneration given to the Virgin Mary (Boettner 1962:197).

Ancestors do not feature in the pantheon worshipped by the Chinese. The reasons for their omission can be found in the familial nature of Chinese society. Only one's own deceased relative should receive the ritualistic sacrifices, funerary rites and daily remembrances. According to the Analects (2:24) it was considered presumptuous for any person to offer sacrifices to another person's ancestors (Legge s a:23). Even modern-day Chinese consider it quite an absurd suggestion to expect strangers to make obeisance to someone else's ancestors.

The cult of the ancestors is practised by individual families who in concert with countless numbers of other families constitute the 'national' yet 'family-centred' observance of the rites for their ancestors. In the past, even the Emperor was expected to offer his 'family' sacrifices to his ancestors as well as to T'ien, to whom he, as T'ien's Son, had to show filiality.

The ancestral cult has never and can never become a world 'faith' because of its ritual dependence on the immediate family. The Chinese cult shares many ritualistic and ideological similarities with similar cults found among other peoples. The Hindus, all the traditional religions in Africa, North American Indians and the islanders of Polynesia are other nationalities which practise

the ancestral cult (Pike 1951:17).

3.3.1.3 Pragmatism and manipulation in religion

The term 'worship' connotes different levels of religious zeal and piety. When dealing with Chinese religious practices, one needs to bear in mind the strong element of pragmatism which must be balanced with an equally strong element of spiritualism.

The classical Chinese concept of humanism does not necessarily decry or dismiss the possibility of the existence of the spiritual realm and spiritual entities. Chinese devotees of the different religions, especially folk religions, tend to be manipulative. Should a deity not perform its duty in safeguarding a particular locality or a group of people, he was replaced by a more capable one who might have a reputation of being more **lean** (spiritually empowered).

While ancestors cannot be replaced or be judged whether they have done their utmost for the success of their descendants, they are nevertheless cared for in the hope that their offsprings will ultimately benefit from their benign influence and receive honours and successes in this life.

Should one therefore speak of the ancestral cult as being a manipulative one? In other words, if the ancestors are fed, and sacrificed to and remembered daily, will the descendants automatically receive honours and financial success? Is the alternative also true that the family which neglects the ancestors will have evil befall them?

Chinese people do not all agree that ancestors provide positive help for their descendants, but few would deny the possibilities of misfortunes which might befall them should they neglect their filial duties towards their ancestors (Gallin 1966:232-234).

3.3.1.4 Chinese spiritualism

By spiritualism is meant the openness of the Chinese to the influences of the spiritual realm in their daily lives and their respect for the spirit world which at times borders on fear.

That some Chinese actually do offer intense worship to their dead cannot be ruled out. Furthermore that some Chinese do pray to their ancestors cannot be denied. The writer knew an elderly lady who used to visit the Newclare cemetery in Johannesburg regularly to offer prayers to the dead. Many Chinese who observe the various rites of the cult of the ancestors will however, object to being categorised as 'worshippers' of their ancestors. Certain cultural rites such as bowing to the dead, simply indicate respect and should not be interpreted as bowing in worship. The traditional Chinese way of showing respect is by bowing, whether it is to the living or to the dead.

The reverence of a son for his deceased ancestors is more personal and therefore of greater sentimental value than Anthony's plea for reverence in his impassioned speech over Caesar's body:

> But yesterday the word of Caesar might have stood against the world; now he lies there, and none so poor to do him reverence. Julius Caesar Act III Sc II ls 118-120.
>
> (Alexander 1951:987)

Although the Chinese revere their ancestors, they are also inveterate deists. They share a common trait with other nations in their attempt to trace their origin to the gods (Smart & Hecht 1982:6). This attempt at establishing a cosmologically-based ethnic identity played a particularly important role in the history of the Chinese people and in the conduct of their relations with all other non-Chinese peoples till as recent as the beginning of the present century.

The attempts of various peoples to trace their origins to a creator or some deity usually depend on myths and legends which purport to have their roots in the distant past.

3.3.2 The mythical rulers

Myths have two main functions: the first is to answer the type of awkward questions asked by children relating to the origin of man and the world, where souls go after death and how the world will end. The second function of myths is to justify the existing social system and to give an account for the traditional rites and customs practised by society. Myths do not remain static and they serve as

> ...a dramatic shorthand record of such matters as invasions, migrations, dynastic changes, admission of foreign cults and social reforms.
>
> (NLEOM 1968:vii)

3.3.2.1 The ancestral cult and the legendary rulers

The origin of the cult of the ancestors among the Chinese may be traced to their belief in the semi-divine origin of their legendary rulers. Although it is impossible to tell when the commencement of the ancestral cult occurred, it is possible to venture a preliminary answer as to how the cult originated and how it developed.

When the semi-legendary emperor Yao resigned his throne to his successor Shun, he announced the succession to his deceased predecessors, that is either his own progenitors or the previous occupants of the throne. Upon his appointment and accession as emperor, Shun in turn set aside various officers for specific tasks. One such office related to the supervision of a **tsung** (an ancestral temple), the first instance of a temple being mentioned in the **Shu Ching** (Classic of History). Other open-air altars were

already in existence for the worship of Shang Ti and the nature spirits prior to the establishment of the ancestral temple (Soothill 1923:183).

The Canon of Shun, which forms part of the Shu Ching, contains a statement of utmost interest and importance for the study of the Chinese ancestral cult. The record told of the resignation of Yao, whose administration of the country commenced in 2357 BC. The inauguration of his successor, Shun took place in the temple of the 'Accomplished Ancestor' (The History 2;1:4). Legge (1880:24) commented on this text that 'that ancestor, was he to whom Yao traced his lineage' and his sanction was thus sought for the transference of the kingdom to another. Shun was then the new ruler of the Chinese State, and he 'signalised the fact by a solemn act of worship'. He sacrificed specially, but with 'the ordinary forms' to Shang Ti, that is, to God.

It appears that the imperial acts related to the cult of the ancestors had an early history and very likely continued to be the sole prerogative of the ruling house although such sacrifices had become a universal custom in fairly recent times. Ling (1974:104) stated that a two channel division developed in Chinese religion: a sophisticated cult of the state and a multitude of cults of local village godlings to whom appeal was made for temporal benefits. The only common link between the state cult and the peasant religions was the rather nebulous concept of T'ien as the Supreme Being.

3.3.2.2 The mythological conception of the legendary rulers

Legendary rulers were born of earthly mothers who were impregnated by the Supreme Deity called Heaven or T'ien. The early rulers who lived during the mythological age were therefore designated as Sons of Heaven, a title which subsequent rulers adopted to enhance their prestige and political power.

Two of the best known ancient semi-divine kings born of such unions were Emperor Yu the Great, founder of the legendary Hsia dynasty (c.2205-1766 BC) and Emperor T'ang, the first of the Shang dynastic rulers (c.1766-1122 BC). Yu was purported to have been born of a virgin who ate seeds which contained the sperm of the Sky Deity. According to the myths, T'ang's mother was made pregnant by a bird's egg that fell from Heaven (Schafer 1974:80).

These typical attempts to associate the human with the divine are not peculiar traits of the Chinese only. The unknown past invites theories of the origin of the human race and on a more ethnic level, the beginnings of a people. In common with other ancient peoples' records, Chinese literature does not reach back to the beginning of creation or the early days of man on earth. Hirth (1974:6) therefore made a statement which could be appended to the history of any race:

> ...Chinese literature knows no beginning for certain elements of culture within the historical period and therefore, assigns them to the mythological ages.

Both Yu and T'ang were exceptional individuals who possessed 'supernatural' gifts of wisdom to rule and uprightness of character. They were the direct recipients of Heaven's spiritual power and also possessed Heaven's royal mandate to rule, a concept which became a potent political mechanism (Fairbank & Reischauer 1979:52).

3.3.2.3 The legendary rulers and Chinese civilization

These kings became the founders of China and contributed to the civilized rule of the land. As the ultimate patriarchs of the nation and the first semi-divine, semi-human rulers of earth, they served as mediators between their deity-father, T'ien, and mankind. China was known by her own people in the ancient past as **T'ien Hsia** ((All) Under Heaven), a description which involved

geo-political and theocratic implications.

The presence of ethnocentric thought is clearly evident in this type of mythological thinking. The concept of T'ien Ming as the granting of the divine authority to rule, has been part of the traditional Chinese process since the beginning of the Chou dynasty, when the idea of Heaven's Mandate was moulded into a useful but two-edged political tool by the founders of the Chou dynasty. Prior to the Chou dynasty, the mandate to rule may be said to have been the inherited right of the early semi-divine rulers and their offsprings due to 'the extraordinary spiritual power which they obtained directly from their heavenly parent' (Schafer 1974:79).

However, after the Shang dynasty (1766-1122 BC) and beginning with the Chou dynasty (1122-220 BC) Heaven's spiritual power was no longer hereditarily available, due to the diminished inherent righteousness of the earlier semi-divine rulers. The later rulers had to depend on the moral approval of Heaven.

Fitzgerald (1978:12) disagrees with the theory of the semi-divine origins of the early Chinese civilization. He holds to the view that the sages who first taught the arts and crafts to the human race were geniuses. Under their guidance mankind left the trees and began to live on the ground in shelters. Further developments ensued in the skills of weapon making and hunting, with agricultural pursuits following at a later stage. These sages also taught men how to tame animals, build boats and establish more permanent communal settlements. Finally men were taught how to work with metal.

The tendency to turn legends into fictitious history, according to Fitzgerald (1978:141) caused the Chinese to accept the legendary figures as the human sage-monarchs of China's 'golden age'.

The early semi-divine Chinese rulers depended on their heavenly ancestor T'ien, to assist them to maintain the cosmic equilibrium. The character for king in Chinese (王) serves as a perfect representation of the Chinese belief in their relationship with the rest of the cosmos. The topmost line represents Heaven, the middle line, man, and the bottom line the earth. The perpendicular line in the middle inter-connecting the three lines represents the ruler himself.

3.3.3 Royal responsibilities

The responsibilities of the early kings included the careful practice of rites which met the demands of their mediatorial role in the cosmos.

3.3.3.1 Ritualism and royal responsibilities

For this reason, the rulers observed the ritual of personally ploughing a furrow at the beginning of the sowing season. In addition to the ritual ploughing which the ruler was obliged to perform as the Son of Heaven, he also had to see that an adequate supply of rain fell in order to ensure a crop at the end of the season. This he sought to accomplish by the offering of sacrifices to the forces of nature, which later received the status of nature spirits and which provided the source of his power in agrarian affairs. The spirits were given names such as the God of Thunder, the Rainbow goddess, the four Dragon Kings. Occasionally even the Heavenly Ancestor T'ien Loh-yeh himself, was invoked (NLEOM 1968:382).

3.3.3.2 Emperor T'ang as a human sacrifice

A prolonged drought may even have required a human sacrifice during the early dynasties. The most famous example of a human sacrifice involved the semi-divine Emperor T'ang, the first ruler of the Shang dynasty. The account which follows occurred during

the early years (1766-1760 BC) of his reign.

For seven years China experienced a disasterous drought. Someone at court made the suggestion that a human sacrifice should be offered to appease the Sky Deity. When the righteous T'ang overheard this suggestion, he volunteered to be the victim. The traditional account tells of how he fasted and cut his nails and on the appointed day, was appropriately garbed and taken in a white carriage pulled by white horses to the mulberry grove where he was to be put to death. The account concluded that while he prayed to the Sky Deity and enquired the reason for the prolonged drought and whether he was the cause of it, a copious shower fell even before he had time to complete his prayers (Legge 1880:54-55).

3.3.3.3 The replenishment of celestial potency

The Chinese historians made provision for their legendary kings to replenish their celestial potency by sexual encounters with a particular type of divine feminine beings. Schafer (1974:80) mentioned that the ancient semi-divine kings were believed to have revived their waning heaven-derived power by means of liaisons with rain-goddesses. These were usually represented as lovely nymphs, clothed in swirling mists and who haunted holy mounds, springs, high peaks and mountains.

3.3.4 The oracle bones

3.3.4.1 The ancestor cult and the oracle bones

The so-called 'oracle bones' have provided the cultural historian with the most important source of evidence to show the link between the cult of the ancestors and the early Chinese of the Shang period. Ringgren and Strom (1967:391) noted that these bones constituted the earliest sources of Chinese religion.

The early kings needed to seek the guidance and the wisdom of their departed semi-divine ancestors.
The early Shang kings acted as the nation's chief shamans. They communicated with the spirits of the venerable Emperor T'ang and other royal ancestors in order to obtain advice and information.

The earliest recorded written material in China dates back to the Shang (c.1766-1122 BC) or Yin period as it is also called. The ancient writing was inscribed on the bronze sacrificial vessels, the oracle bones and on artifacts discovered in tombs and the foundations of palaces. According to the inscriptions on many of these artifacts, Thompson (1969:34) concluded that there seemed to be no reason to doubt that the religious system of the most ancient period in China's recorded history was based on ancestor worship.

The communication between the incumbent of the throne and the spirits of the royal predecessors was made possible by means of divination. Amongst the most important materials used in divination was animal bone. The archaeological sites at Lungshan and Anyang have yielded numerous examples of such bones.

3.3.4.2 Archaeological evidences of the ancestral cult

The excavations at Anyang during the decade of 1928-1937 revealed an advanced fourteenth century BC culture. Shang bronze sacrificial vessels indicated the 'full-flowering of the Bronze Age'. The Chinese scholar Tung Tso-pin was convinced that King Pan-keng had moved his capital to Anyang in 1384 BC and that the last phase of Shang culture lasted until 1111 BC when the dynasty was overthrown by the Chou invaders (Lee 1967:6).

The majority of the 98 000 pieces of oracle bones were excavated mostly prior to 1928 and housed in private and public institutions in China and abroad. Since 1928, 33 500 additional pieces of oracle bones have been recovered (Chang 1980:39).

The Shang rulers and their augurs used three types of animal bones: bovid scapulae, turtle plastrons which are the lower shells of turtles, and carapaces, that is, the under shells of tortoises. When plastrons were used, the method of divination is referred to as plastromancy. Capulamancy refers to the use of carapaces or capulae while the use of bovid scapulae in divination is normally known as scapulamancy. The combined use of fire and bone in ascertaining the meaning of oracular portents has been termed pyroscapulimancy.

When pyroscapulimancy was practised, a small circular pit was bored on the flat side of the prepared shoulder blade bone of a bovid. A heated bronze point was then applied to the edge of the pit. The pattern of the resultant crack, the angle and size of the smaller cracks in relation to the main crack were some factors which determined to the augur whether the spirits gave a favourable or an unfavourable answer. Chang (1980:32-35) provides useful details of the interpretation and the preservation of such oracle bone records. In many instances the divined answer was also recorded on the bone for future verification. Many such bones were found in the ancient royal archives.

All matters of importance relating to the governing of the nation had to be tested by means of divination in order to ascertain the will of the ancestors. Questions relating to the weather, the advisibility of military engagements and proposed royal activities were put to the ancestors. The interesting conclusion was reached by Schafer (1974:81) that these ghostly forefathers were in fact the true rulers of China.

Thompson (1969:35) citing Tung Tso-pin, the leading authority on this source of archaeological artifacts, claimed that the one hundred thousand pieces of oracle bones and shells contain little else but the questions which the reverential Yin kings addressed to their ancestors and the answers which were interpreted from

the crack patterns.

After thirty years of examining the oracle bones and other archaeological evidences, Tung concluded that despite the practice of other religious beliefs,

> ...it was still ancestor-worship that held the most important position in the religious life of the Yin people. 'To serve the dead as if they were living'- we can say that the piety of the Yin people did reach that degree.

3.3.4.3 The identity of the Spirit-Beings

The identity of the spirit-beings to whom the questions were directed in the oracle bone sub-culture remains an intriguing point on which scholars differ. Did the early Shang kings direct their questions to their own paternal ancestral spirits or to the supreme, First Spirit, the great ancestor whom they considered was their regal ancestor? If they were the Sons of Heaven, then surely Heaven was their Father.

Lee (1967:6) noted that all the oracle bones refer to the Supreme deity as 'Ti' but there was one fragment which had the term 'Shang Ti', which is still the term used for God today in the Protestant Bible. This term was probably first used in the thirteenth century BC. When the Shang rulers assumed the title of 'Ti' or 'emperor', the term 'Shang Ti' was then employed to distinguish God from the mere rulers on earth. Legge (1971) dealt at length with the problems relating to the Chinese name of God in his book, The notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits.

The evidence considered in this study does not present the Heavenly Ancestor as being the equivalent of the Judaeo-Christian Creator-Father. Chinese cosmology views the creation of the world as an activity of the creative ethers of the impersonal Ch'i and

not that of a personal God.

It appears to the writer that the relationship which the Sons of Heaven sought to maintain with their paternal ancestors is a question which has not been adequately addressed by sinologists.

The Classic of History recorded that the early legendary emperors sacrificed to their ancestors but it may only have been at the beginning of the Chou dynasty that ancestor 'worship' was first introduced to the common people (Chua 1982:247).

Various aspects of the cult of the ancestors have been touched upon in this section of the study. In the following chapter the development of the ancestor cult will be traced in the cultural institutions of the family and filial piety. The nature and destination of the human soul will also be examined alongside the theory and practice of the cult.

4.0 THE ANCESTOR CULT IN CHINA

4.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY

4.1.1 The centrality of the family

One of the sociological characteristics of the Chinese people is their continued emphasis on the centrality of the family in society. It was within the extended family that the Chinese nuclear family found its life circumscribed. The patriarch of the family was the most authoritative individual in the family who arranged the marriages of his children or as grandfather had an important say in the marriages of his grandchildren. It was this oldest male member of the family who guided the family in the observance of the various religious and festive rites and holidays. Because age was synonymous with wisdom, the patriarch was therefore also considered as the most knowledgeable individual in the family, to be consulted on all major issues affecting the economic and social welfare of the whole family.

While this patriarchal model operated in many homes, it was more than likely that in practice a strong matriarchal influence was also a factor to be reckoned with in Chinese family life.

Although references will be made to the importance of the family in China's past, many of the basic principles still apply at the present time to Chinese living in China and in other countries. Western influences and changed societal circumstances have naturally affected Chinese family life in the West to a certain extent.

4.1.2 The self-sufficient extended family

In the past, the extended family not only lived together but also worked together in the fields and at home. The family thus

created employment for each person at home. The work ethic within the home required each person to earn his or her keep. One of the typical expressions relating to productivity and livelihood in Chinese stated: 'if you wish to eat you must work'.

The extended family also provided the entertainment which a large family tended to induce, especially after the evening meal when everyone could relax after a hard day's work in the fields.

It has been said that even the religious needs of the family were provided for in the form of the ancestor cult. One could describe the ancestor cult as utilising the family genetic chain in order to guarantee that the ancestors would be remembered for at least three or four generations by the immediate family and thereafter by the clan members after the spirit tablet had been positioned in the ancestor hall. In Hakka the **d'hoon leung** (installing the tablets) is only observed every few years.

4.1.3 The importance of sons in the ancestor cult

Writing on the social structure of the Han dynasty (221 BC-AD 220) Ch'u (1972:19) noted that it was important for a man to have sons in order that ancestor worship might be continued. A man who only had daughters was considered as not having any descendants as the children of the daughters were counted as descendants of her husband's family. Adoption of a son was the only solution and the important condition was that the adopted male should be a member of the same lineage, as the spirit of a dead man would not accept the offerings of one who was not consanguineosly related to him. Many believed that a son adopted from a different kin group introduced alien blood into the family.

Another common belief was that when a man died his soul still needed to be nourished by kinsmen or by his own living family members. It was for this reason that ancestor worship was seen

as an obligation of the children and it constituted a major function of the family (Ch'u 1972:30).

It was thus very important for people to have sons to attend to their needs in the after-life. The Chinese believed that their souls required money, some means of transport, food and drink, as well as clothing and housing. As all such basic needs could only be provided by the male descendants, it was imperative that sons be bought if no sons were born to the family. For a Chinese person who sincerely believes in ancestor 'worship', it must be a horrendous thought that his soul might go hungry, thirsty, unhoused and unclothed for all eternity should his male descendants not observe the rites involved in the ancestor cult.

4.1.4 Ch'ia chiao and the ancestor cult

The **ch'ia chiao** (family teaching) served as the catch-phrase for all the correct forms of behaviour, as well as the moral, ethical and ritual teachings which a child received at home. As these aspects of life were taught by both example and by precept at home, the daily observance of rites associated with the ancestor cult were also cultivated as part of the young child's informal education.

Parents therefore ensured that their future well-being was in good hands and that they would be remembered by their descendants and their clan. In this way they would be immortalized for at least a few generations.

To ensure that type of future bliss, the living parents not only had to teach their own children the essentials of the ancestor cult, but they themselves had to set a meaningful example for their own children to follow as they illustrated their filial piety to their own forebears in the observance of the requisite rituals.

The visits to the ancestor hall, especially on the birth and death anniversaries, and religious festivals, served to keep alive the memory of one's departed relatives. It was here that all ancestor tablets from one's grandparents upwards, were kept. It was also usual to hold special family and clan conferences in the ancestor temple. Thompson (1969:36) even described the rows upon rows of spirit tablets as being the equivalent of share-holders in the family corporation and the necessity of holding such family and clan business in the presence of the ancestors. The spirit tablets kept at home serve as a constant reminder of the links which exist between the living family and their ancestors.

Baker (1966:28) made the interesting point that the reverence for ancestors provides 'a sense of stability' and long-term responsibility in Chinese society in addition to the cultivation of a conservative spirit.

The family plays an important role in most societies, but the Chinese regard the family as the most important expression of human society.

The family is considered as a unity and indivisible. The interests which members show each other in life is therefore considered as quite natural to be continued after death. Death for most Chinese means another form of life in a different sphere but a life which retains its links with the living descendants.

It is this close family relationship which served as the cause of the establishment of the ancestor cult (Radhakrishnan 1944:59).

4.2 FILIAL PIETY: THE VEHICLE OF THE ANCESTOR CULT

The basis of filial piety takes into serious account the importance of one's forebears and the continued relationship

which should obtain between the deceased and the descendants. The purpose of this relationship is two-fold: to ensure the familial ties and to train the younger generation in learning respect for their elders. The teaching of filial piety has the additional advantage of teaching the young to respect outsiders and to cultivate a spirit of responsibility towards them. Filiality therefore serves as a link between the living and the dead. The cult of the ancestors would cease to exist without the moral infrastructure of filial piety. It is in this sense that one may describe filial piety as the vehicle of the ancestor cult.

4.2.1 The concept of filial piety

At the most basic level filial piety concerns the devout and dutiful sentiments of children, towards their parents. The concept is not peculiar only to the Chinese but may be found in most societies. The Jews are encouraged in the Old Testament to obey and honour their parents while Christians are all likewise encouraged by the New Testament. The concept has enjoyed special attention by the Chinese, especially since the sixth century BC when under Confucius the doctrine of **hsiao** (filial piety) was examined from the humanistic point of view. The close association which filial piety developed with ancestor worship is understandable when viewed from the historical perspective.

4.2.1.1 The Doctrine of the Mean and filial sacrifices

The Doctrine of **Chung Yung** (The Doctrine of the Mean), was originally a chapter in the **Li Chi** (Book of Rites). The Chung Yung achieved the status of an independent book during the early period of the Han dynasty (202 BC - AD 220), and it emphasized 'the central way' in which Confucianism was to be interpreted (Chan 1973:97).

In section seventeen, Confucius wrote that Shun, the last of the

five legendary emperors, was the Son of Heaven, and as Emperor, had received the appointment of Heaven to rule. Because he was 'indeed greatly filial', temple and descendants' sacrifices were made to him.

Confucius recorded in section eighteen that King Wu, who overthrew the wicked King Chou of Shang not only ruled as Son of Heaven after receiving Heaven's mandate, but that temple sacrifices were also made to him. His descendants also 'preserved sacrifices' to him. Of special interest to this study is the mention that

> he sacrificed to the past reigning dukes of the house with imperial rites. These rites were extended to the feudal lords, great officers, officers, and the common people.
> (Chan 1973:103)

King Wu apparently sacrificed to his royal predecessors of his own household, as may be deduced from the words, 'past reigning dukes of the house'. However, the rites which he extended to the other classes of people did not mean that 'imperial rites' could be practised by everyone. The elevation of sacrifices was a principle which he had enunciated and which he had set as a precedent as recorded in section eighteen of the Doctrine of the Mean.

According to the traditional Chinese chronology (Chan 1973:xv) the sacrifices to imperial ancestors had been well established by the time King Wu came to the throne at the beginning of the Chou dynasty in 1122 BC. He ruled for three years till 1119 BC (Kao 1978:4). The phrase 'descendants preserved the sacrifices to him' indicates the association of the ancestor cultic practice of sacrifices and the basis of that sacrifice, namely the practice of filial piety.

4.2.1.2 The purpose of the temple services

Further proof of the close association which filial piety enjoyed with the cult of the ancestors may be found in the nineteenth section of the Doctrine of the Mean where Confucius described men of filial piety as those who 'skillfully' carried out the wishes of their forefathers as well as 'skillfully' carried forward their undertakings. One detects the strong emphasis on obedience and conservativeness in this initial description. They were also men who attended to their responsibilities in the maintenance of the ancestor temple, the display of the ancestor vessels and robes (presumably to the family) and the offering of the 'appropriate offerings' of the season.

The services in the temple were to accomplish a number of purposes: the proper placement of the family either on the right or on the left according to the order of descent. This exercise was to distinguish the more honourable from the humbler in station. A second purpose of the service was to give opportunity to those who were worthy and were capable of assisting in the services. The third major purpose of the ancestor temple service was to give honoured places at the concluding feast, to those with white hair, in order to follow the order of seniority (Chan 1973:103).

It is not certain whether filial piety developed into ancestor worship or whether ancestor worship encouraged the practice of filial piety.

4.2.2 <u>The practice of filial piety</u>

4.2.2.1 The purpose and origin of filial piety

T-H Cheng (1973:52), an ardent supporter of the theory that ancestor worship encouraged the practice of filial piety stated,

> Ancestor worship is not due to superstition or

> meant to immortalize the ancestors, but is, in its essence, to foster filial affection, whereby other virtues may be attained....

The primeval benevolence of feeding the elderly, helpless parents in order to save them from starvation helped to develop filial piety, according to Cheng (1973:54). The gradual practice of looking after one's parents gave rise to the broader expression of love to other near kinsmen and later to other non-related members of one's community.

The practice of the dutiful sentiments of children towards their parents must naturally occur at home, but the spirit of respect and concern which is intrinsic to filial piety, constitutes the foundation of a useful and highly valuable social attitude for interpersonal relations with non-family members.

4.2.2.2 Filial piety: a Confucian virtue

Bodde (1981:187) also called for the practice of filial piety which is central to family values, to be interpreted as a Confucian virtue.

How is filial piety practised according to the teachings of Confucianism? An appeal will be made to two major ancient sources: the Lun Yu and the **Hsiao Ching** (the Classic of Filial Piety). Certain reservations may need to be entertained with regards to Confucius' authorship of the Hsiao Ching (Hughes 1954:112).

4.2.2.3 The basis and morality of filial piety

The opening chapter to the Classic of Filial Piety deals with the basis of filial piety, and it appears to be rather selfish and self-preservative in nature. The individual is taught not to injure himself or allow himself to be injured as his body and its

parts came from his parents. The realisation of this fact should motivate his self-preservation.

> The body with its limbs and hair and skin comes to a man from his father and mother, and it is on no account to be spoiled or injured.
>
> (Hughes 1954:113)

To discharge one's filial duty is not simply to support one's parents by providing them with food, to clothe them and to provide a roof over their heads. Ware (1955:26) translated the relevant analect with telling effect:

> Today when people call a man filial they mean that he is supporting his parents. But he does as much for his dogs and horses! If he does not show respect for his parents how is he differentiating between them and the animals (2:7)?

The first task of the individual is to establish himself. The text is not clear whether this was to be interpreted morally, socially or financially. He is then to walk in the Way and to make himself famous in later generations. The ideal motive in his success is to glorify his parents. This is the highest form of filial piety (Hughes 1954:113).

In the past when travelling was far more onerous and time consuming, the advice given to sons was not to move too far away from the family home lest emergencies should arise and the son is unable to be home in time for his parents' sake. It may be that the following brief but telling Analect (4:19) was penned for this very situation.

> While your parents live, do not wander far. Let your sojourning be only in specified places.
>
> (Ware 1955:37)

Children should always know their parents' ages while they are alive. This knowledge should be a source of both joy and dread (Ware 1955:37). It should be a source of joy because one realises that one's parents are still with one. The knowledge of the parents' ages also serves as a constant reminder that one's opportunities to serve them grow fewer with their growing older. What should happen when one's loyalty to the ruler conflicts with one's filial piety? Such a case was discussed by the duke of Sheh with Confucius (Analects 13:18). The duke was reported to have said,

> Among us here are those who may be styled upright in their conduct. If their father have stolen a sheep, they will bear witness to the fact. Confucius said, Among us, in our part of the country, those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals the misconduct of the son, and the son conceals the misconduct of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this.
>
> (Legge s a:184-185)

This analect shows very clearly that family ties take precedence over one's civil responsibilities in Confucian ethics.
Problems do arise when parents grow somewhat difficult in their ways. Confucius (Analects 4:18) advised that as a person serves his parents he should remonstrate with them only slightly. If on doing so he finds that they are set in having their own way, he should be even more respectful and not thwart them. Even though this might overwhelm him with toil, he should not become angry with them (Legge s a:45).

4.2.2.4 Confucianism and the ancestor cult

According to Hardacre (1987:263) East Asian ancestral rites constitute a major part of the practice of Confucianism. Furthermore four functions may be attributed to the practice of ancestor

'worship': to uphold the authority of the elders, to support social control measures and to foster conservative and traditionalist attitudes. Ancestor 'worship' was also clearly linked to an ethic of filial piety and obedience shown to elders.

The death of parents elicited two sets of apparent contradictory responses by Confucius (Analects 11:11). When one of his followers Chi Lu asked him about serving the spirits of the dead, Confucius was reported to have said that while one is not able to serve men, how can one serve their spirits? When the disciple further enquired about death, he was in turn asked how he could know about death when he did not yet know about life (Legge s a:142).

Confucius was not teaching in this analect that his disciple should not be involved in the ancestor cult. He pointed out the lack of knowledge of interpersonal relationships amongst the living. To him, the world of the dead constituted a topic on which he did not wish to discourse unnecessarily. This was in keeping with his teaching style, (Analects 7:20) for the subjects on which he did not talk were - extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings (Legge s a:87).
He nevertheless gave the following advice (Analects 3:12) to those who made offerings to the ancestors and to the divinities:

> Make your offerings to the ancestors as though they were actually present in person; make your offerings to the divinities as though they were actually present in person.
>
> (Ware 1955:31)

Whether Confucius was religious or not is a debatable issue. We are told however that the only present for which he bowed was that of the flesh of sacrifice (Analects 10:15.3). The comment which Legge (s a:134) offered on this point was that for all other gifts from friends, he accepted as part of the 'community of goods' between friends. Sacrificial flesh was offered by

friends to spirits of ancestors or his parents, and thus demanded acknowledgement.

4.2.2.5 The endemic spirit of filial piety

The spirit of filial piety is endemic in Chinese humanism but it has also penetrated the courts of law. Bodde (1981:189) tells of an instance of filial piety in law when provision was made for a criminal who was sentenced to death or long-term prison sentence to have his sentence commuted should he be the sole support of aged or infirm parents. His sentence could be commuted by flogging or by paying a fine. This was to enable him to remain at home to care for the parents. In 1769 this principle was broadened to include criminals who were the sole male heirs of deceased parents. They too were allowed to stay at home in order to continue the family sacrifices to the ancestors.

4.2.2.6 The rationale of the cult

The rationale of the cult of the ancestors finds its commencement and its fulfilment in the teaching and the practice of filial piety. Filial piety provides the essential emotions and sentiments of family love and responsibilitiy while parents are alive. It has succeeded in death to span the chasm which separates the living and the dead with a bridge constructed with elements of reverence, honour, family relatedness and the constant sacrifice of provisions for the well-being of the departed loved ones. In return the offsprings enjoy the help and prosperity which the parents, albeit departed, continue to grant their children.

Filial piety has been described as the greatest of all Confucian virtues and also that it acts as the cement which holds together the Chinese society. Even though separated by thousands of kilometres Chinese families retain contact with each other (Kane 1971:208).

The practice of filial piety even after death points to the belief among the majority of Chinese that life continues in some or other form after death.

4.2.2.7 The Confucian conflict between ancestor 'worship' and personal survival

While the basic ethical motivation for the practice of the cult of the ancestors originates from Confucianism (vide: Classic of Filial Piety), the mortuary duties of the descendants are complicated with the intertwining of Buddhist and Taoistic concepts relating to life after death (Bodde 1981:316-330). In Bodde's examination of the Chinese view of immortality he reached a number of striking conclusions: For millenia China had been a stronghold of ancestor worship: a cult based upon the immortality of the soul, that it has been a country rife with superstitious beliefs in spirits and ghosts of all kinds among the common people. Yet China's sophisticated thinkers have hesitated to admit the possibility of immortality or they have conceived of it only in general semi-pantheistic terms rather than in terms of a personal survival (Bodde 1981:320-321).

The destiny of the soul in the cult of the ancestors presents peculiar problems to the researcher on Chinese religions. There is no certainty amongst sinologists as to the number of souls each person possesses nor is there unanimity as to the ultimate destination of the soul or souls. A certain measure of confusion has crept into popular Chinese religion from Buddhism and popular Taoism with their differing beliefs concerning the fate of the souls in the hereafter.

The nature and the destination of the soul will be examined in the following section.

4.3 THE NATURE AND DESTINATION OF THE SOUL IN THE ANCESTOR CULT

4.3.1 Reluctance to let the deceased depart

Upon the death of a relative, special offerings need to be made to his spirit. These special offerings include meat, wine, fruit and vegetables which are placed on a table and the dead is invited to partake of it. This ceremony is observed when the corpse is placed in the coffin, on the day of burial as well as on the two anniversaries of the birth and death of the deceased (Dore 1966;1:111).

Certain funeral rites point to a reluctance on the part of the Chinese to 'let go of the dead' as evidenced in the 'call back' rite. In traditional practices, immediately after death had occurred, an outer garment of the newly deceased is taken onto the roof of the home and waved back and forth by a relative, while calling out loudly for the departing soul to return. The death howl which always accompanies the onset of death, has been interpreted by de Groot (1972;1:243-254) as being part of the original rite of the 'call back' rite. Citing the Li Chi (9:28) de Groot (1972;1:254) noted that the death howl and the recalling of the dead had to be observed by everybody because the sorrow displayed by the wailing and the weeping, the feelings expressed by the mourning garments, and the food of congee and rice, extend from the Son of Heaven to all.

This reluctance to allow the soul to depart may be seen in the observance of the traditional waiting of 49 days after which only the final burial rites are observed. The placing of food near the body, the light at the side of the corpse, during the 49 day period and the tablet, pennons and portrait which serve as the harbours of the soul, are all inducements to the soul to return

and be rejoined to its mortal remains. In the light of these rites, de Groot (1972;1:240) was of the opinion that while the Chinese regard death as a separation of the vital spirit from the body, they do cling to the belief that the spirit keeps hovering about the body, even after it had been deposited in the grave. They do not therefore regard death as an absolute reality. Life remains after the soul had left the body and the survivors entertain a lingering hope that the soul may re-enter the body and thus cause a resurrection.

4.3.2 A firm belief in life after death

That the Chinese firmly believe that life continues beyond the grave is amply proved by the provisions made for the welfare of the departed souls. The living show their concern in the transmission of spirit homes, clothes and money, to the **tay yok** (netherworld) by immolatory means. The supreme indication of belief in life after death is the practice of ancestor veneration by the Chinese.

To many Chinese, the living world is filled with spirits of which there are all kinds, including those of the wind, the river, the soil, and fire. Possibly the most important spirits were those of the ancestors (Fairservis 1959:127).
As the spirits of the ancestors were considered to be ever present within the confines of the family, living members of the family and the spirits constituted the unbroken united family. The death of the father did not therefore mean the loss of contact with him or the loss of his guidance and help in family matters. He continued to exercise his paternal virtues from beyond the grave but the family was expected to meet certain obligations to him within the framework of filial piety.

4.3.3 The development of funerary practices

In examining some of the basic Chinese eschatological thinking,

some attention will be given to the development of funerary practices which affect the multifaceted perspectives of the soul among the Chinese people.

The ancient Chinese buried human beings with the deceased, and in certain imperial cases, chariots and horses were also included with the purpose of accompanying the buried king to the netherworld (Watson 1966:48). In later periods images of humans were buried in the graves as substitutes for human sacrifices. Confucius was said to have recommended straw effigies instead of wooden ones. At the same period during which these changes occurred in funeral traditions, 'grave quality' domestic appliances were also substituted for the genuine articles (de Groot 1972;2:806-808).

The practice of 'dwelling on the tomb' for three years by slaves, wives, children, parents or even masters served as a more humane way of showing grief and was in fact a substitute for being sacrificed and buried alongside the deceased. The earliest instance of 'dwelling on the tombs' was recorded in the first section of the Mencius, where reference was made to Tze Kung of the fifth century BC. It was claimed that he spent a further three years on the tomb of Confucius after the customary three years of mourning had elapsed. The village of K'ung was actually founded on the locus of Confucius' tomb. The founding inhabitants were the disciples and some of the inhabitants of the State of Lu who 'dwelt on the tomb' (de Groot 1972;2:795).

Another common funeral practice is the burning of grave money and clothes for the dead. It was not a practice easily acceded to by the orthodox Chinese for it was only in the eighth century AD at the court of Wang Yu that this rite was admitted. The use of mock money gained wider acceptance during the Sung dynasty (960-1279) during which the Confucians sanctioned its use in the veneration of the dead (de Groot 1972;2:714-716).

Hsun Tzu the Taoist philosopher who lived during the third century BC, taught that articles to be placed in the grave should not be completed as if for use by the deceased. These articles should merely indicate the feeling of grief. Such articles which were specially prepared for the dead person should have the shape of real objects but should not be usable. He called such articles 'token' or 'spirit' articles which should serve two purposes: to show grief on the part of the family and to symbolize that the deceased had changed his place of dwelling (Watson 1967; Hsun Tzu:104).

J J M de Groot (1972;3:855) saw the grave in China as sacred because it served as the 'abode of the soul and the body'. Unless the body and the soul co-exist, the 'disembodied spirit' cannot long escape destruction without its natural support. The grave becomes the chief shelter of the soul and serves as the principal altar dedicated to the 'worship' of the soul.

The soul is also believed to enter the ancestor tablet, and in addition, enter heaven to be judged as worthy of receiving its reward or its punishment by rebirth after being punished in one or more of the hells. The nature of the soul from the Chinese perspective will be examined below in an attempt to unravel some of the confusions which exist in Chinese eschatology.

4.3.4 The nature of the soul

4.3.4.1 The terms used to describe the soul

A number of words are used to refer to the different types of ethereal beings in Chinese literature. The term **shen** (spirit or soul) is still commonly used to refer to the non-material part of man. Prior to the sixth century BC, the Chinese believed that man possessed one soul in his deceased state. In the Classics the word shen is used with reference to spirits of nature as well as the disembodied human spirits. In later times the same word

was used to denote the soul in the living being (Soothill 1923:173).

The **Yin-Yang** (dualistic abstract cosmic forces or principles) involve the interaction of two mutually complementary forces or principles which create and destroy, depending on the ascendency of the Yang or the Yin. In Chinese metaphysics and philosophical thought, the Yang is the positive, warm and bright element while the Yin is the negative, cold and dark element.

With the introduction of the Yin-Yang dualism during the Chou dynasty, the concept of the human soul was also subjected to this school of dualistic interpretation. Souls were divided into two categories: the Yin souls were considered as **kuei** (ghosts) and the Yang souls were called **shen** (spirits or gods). The spirits were considered to be the higher form and the ghosts the lower form of the non-material parts of man. According to King (1974:140) kuei is often used of one's own ancestors although shen is always used in reference to ancestor 'worship'.

Two other terms have also been traced as originating during the Chou period: the **p'o** (sentient soul) and the **h'un** (spiritual soul). Fitzgerald (1961a:43-44) noted that the p'o, or the 'animal' soul, as he calls it, is created at conception and the hun soul is created at the moment of birth (Kitagawa 1968:51).

Confucius also used a dualistic approach in his reply to a question on the nature of soul. He explained that the **ch'i** (breath) was the full manifestation of the shen while the p'o was in similar fashion the full manifestation of the kuei (de Groot 1972;6:4).

When combined, the terms **kuei-shen** (negative and positive spiritual forces) take on a new dimension. According to Ch'en Ch'un, the combined term should be considered in four categories; the Confucian classics, in ancient religious sacrifices, in

latter-day sacrifices and in reference to demons and gods. The term 'Confucian Classics' meant to him the Classics as interpreted by the Neo-Confucianists who envisaged the operation of positive and negative forces behind events. The process of expansion was considered as a shen activity and contraction kuei.

This cosmological application of the kuei-shen concept should be kept distinct from the other three 'religion orientated' categories. In ancient times shen usually connoted heavenly beings while kuei referred to spirits of deceased human beings. In Ch'en Ch'un's 'latter-day sacrifices' the combined term indicated the ancestors as the recipients of the sacrifices. In popular religion shen was used to describe beneficent spirit beings and kuei was used for evil demons. In Neo-Confucianism kuei-shen may refer to all three categories but more often than not, the term indicated the activity of the material force known as ch'i.

In summing up Ch'en Ch'un's use of kuei-shen, Chan (1973:789-790) quoted Cheng Tsai's generally accepted dictum that the negative and positive spirits are the spontaneous activity of the two material forces known as the Yin and the Yang.

Two other terms are used to designate the 'higher' soul.

The term **ling h'un** (hun soul) is also used. The character for ling in the Chinese script is composed of two words: the word for rain-drops and the word for wizard. The intrinsic meaning of this composite word means 'clever' or 'intelligent' and has a strong association with the rain-making ritual of the ancient Chinese. The combined term of ling hun is the preferred translation for the word 'soul' in Chinese Christian circles (Soothill 1923:175).

The term **ming** (bright) is used less frequently for the 'higher' soul. It's meaning refers to the brighter or Yang part of the

soul which has been freed from the grosser and darker Yin part of man's being. The association with the ethereal part of nature becomes obvious when one realizes that philologically, the component parts of ming consist of the characters for the sun and the moon. The Chinese combined the two brightest light-emitting objects in the heavens in their attempt to describe the nature of the 'higher' soul.

The term ming is used in the Li Chi (ch 61) in connection with the soul as 'manifesting itself on high as a shining ming or light (de Groot 1972;4:4-5).

The term shen has also become linked with the word ming and together as **shen-ming** (divine spirits) serves to distinguished the good spirits from the kuei or demons.

4.3.4.2 The multiple souls theories

One of the most perplexing problems which faces the student of Chinese religious practices is related to the number of souls which the individual possesses. Reference was made at the beginning of this section to the early Chinese belief that man possesses one soul. The introduction of the Yin-Yang school of thought necessitated the adoption of a dualistic approach to the soul. This approach required the Yin soul to be associated with the earth and the Yang soul to be linked with heaven.

These basic dualistic interpretations have continued into the present era. Heaven is seen by the Chinese as the 'fructifying power of the universe' and the shen soul which is considered as male, is therefore associated with heaven. The kuei soul which emanates from the earth, and which is considered as Yin or female, returns to the earth. **shen soul** ('male' soul) is called the <u>animus</u> soul and the **kuei soul** ('female' soul) is known as the <u>anima</u> soul (de Groot 1972;4:4).

Thompson (1969:10) interpreted the dualistic teaching of man possessing two souls, as the original belief of the Chinese.

Burkhardt in his three volume publication on Chinese creeds and customs, seemed to vacillate between two and three souls. In the first volume (1981;1:2) he held to three souls view. In the second volume (1981;2:28) he said that 'the Chinese are united in the belief that the human body is possessed of two souls...'. However in his third volume (1981;3:30) he reverted to the triple soul theory.

The two-soul theory appears to enjoy general acceptance as seen in the writings of Eberhard (1977:26), Fitzgerald (1961a:43-44) and de Groot (1972;4:4-5).

The two-soul theory is further complicated by the belief on the part of some Chinese that the souls are themselves multi-partite. J J M de Groot (1972;4:70) cites a Taoist authority, Koh Hung, that man's two souls are multi-partite with the hun consisting of three parts, and the p'o seven parts. This view appears to date back to Chu Hsi of the Sung dynasty (960-1279) or even earlier (de Groot 1972;4:70).

Soothill (1923:174) was of the opinion that while some have implied the separate, distinct existence of these ten entities, he nevertheless thought that the ten entities represented 'crude phychological differentiation of functions of one soul'.

Another theory holds that man also possesses five shen, each inhabiting one of his five viscera. Neither of these two theories enjoyed the support of any ancient teachings and consequently the orthodox schools of philosophy made them a topic of speculation (de Groot 1972;4:70).

The various terms used in reference to the soul and their inter-relatedness to each other, may be summed up as follows:

The Chinese have believed since the Chou dynasty (1122-220 BC) that man possesses two souls. The shen or immortal soul which emanates from the celestial part of the universe, consists of the Yang substance. When operating actively in the living body, the shen is called ch'i. When the soul is separated from the body, it is called hun and continues to exist as a refulgent spirit which is called ming.

The material substance of the soul is called kuei and emanates from the earthly or terrestial part of the cosmos and is made up of the Yin element. In the living being, this soul also operates under the name of the p'o and when the individual dies, the soul returns to its source, the earth.

Whether the Chinese people believe in two souls or a multiple of entities or parts of the souls, the destination of such souls remains a distinctly important aspect of their religious practices.

4.3.5 The destination of the souls

4.3.5.1 Different destinations of the souls

The destination of the souls determines for the Chinese person the forms of rites he is obliged to observe. The traditional belief is that two souls exist; the one enters the grave and the other heaven, from where blessings are dispatched to the surviving family. Thompson (1969:10) noted that the longevity and state of the earth-bound soul was dependent on the initial and proper interment of the deceased. As both the p'o soul and the earth are Yin in character, the soul is assured of a peaceful existence in the grave.

Fitzgerald (1961a:43-44) was of the opinion that at death, the p'o soul remains in the tomb and is nourished from the offerings made at the tomb by its relatives. When the body had decayed,

this soul sinks into the 'Yellow Springs', the Chinese underworld, where it continues a shadowy existence.

According to Eberhard (1977:26) the animal or p'o continues to live for as long as people remember it and it is kept from hunger by means of sacrifices.

This soul lives in the grave, haunts the surrounding district when not fed and clothed, but if interred in a geomantically ideal spot, this same spirit could influence, in inexplicable ways, the fortunes of the deceased person's descendants in time to come (Freedman 1966:125). This the spirit will do irrespective of the distance which might separate the grave site from the whereabouts of the descendants (Freedman 1966:126).

Bodde (1981:133) stated more specifically that the p'o soul remains in the tomb with the corpse for three years, after which the soul descends into the Yellow Springs.

One Hakka-speaking informer in Johannesburg volunteered the information that those who follow the traditional Chinese funerary practices believe that Buddhist priests possess **sen sin di** (low psychic awareness) and is therefore able to detect the presence of spirits. In other words, such priests possess psychic powers in being able to see at the interment whether the soul **lock tee** (descends into the earth) as an evil spirit or **song te'ahn** (ascend into heaven) as a good spirit (Interview Mrs FD: 17.3.1989). A person who possesses **sen sin kow** (a high psychic awareness) is considered as being above the state of detecting the presence of spirits.

Confusion abounds in the belief that each person possesses **some f'hoon cheat p'huck** (three souls and seven other spiritual entities). Any attempt to associate the three souls and the seven spiritual parts of man with his ultimate destiny can only result in confusion. When a person is seriously ill, a priest

or a spirit medium will attempt to call back these spiritual components by means of chants and prayers. This rite is based on the presupposition that death occurs when these component parts of the individual take their leave of him. The 'call-back ceremony' which occurs immediately after the death of an individual, is very likely based on this concept of death (Interview Mrs FD: 17.3.1989).

Burkhardt (1981;1:2) wrote that three souls leave the body at death. One enters the ancestor tablet, one hovers or hangs about the grave while the third soul is 'despatched to the Land of Shades' to be dealt with according to the type of life the deceased lived. This view is shared by Chua (1982:247).

Tan (1979:2-3) noted that many traditionally-minded Chinese hold to the belief that man has within himself the Yang and the Yin forces. Physical death separates the two. If the deceased is 'not provided for' its Yin or kuei element will be evil, its condition wretched and eventually it will cease to exist but not before causing a great deal of trouble to the living. If the positive Yang element or shen is 'properly provided for' by his living relatives, it will survive. In fact it will reside in three places: one part will ascend to heaven, another part will remain in the grave to receive the sacrifices, and the third will reside 'with the spirit (spirits?) (writer's query) of the ancestor shrine', placed either in the home or in the temple.

Thus a number of theories exist as to the destination of the soul. This aspect of Chinese beliefs is very dependent on the view held on the nature of the soul.

4.3.5.2 The importance of sacrifices to the souls

At death the hun soul makes its way to the palace of Shang Ti, the Supreme Ruler in heaven. Two major dangers face the hun on its journey: the earth spirit, which may devour it and the

heavenly wolf, which guards the palace. However, the prayers and sacrifices of the family enable the hun soul to reach its destination. Once established in the heavenly palace, the soul leads a nobleman's life. He also becomes a powerful 'ancestor deity', able to shower benefits on the living descendants.

Fitzgerald (1961a:44) further noted that this soul draws sustenance from the sacrifices offered in the ancestor temple. In return for these sacrifices, the ancestor spirit guides and helps his living descendants through divination and intercessory means. If sacrifices are discontinued or prove to be insufficient, both the earth-bound and the heaven-bound souls are severely affected. The p'o soul becomes a roaming kuei, malevolent and hostile to all men while the hun soul also becomes a kuei, condemned to eternal misery.

According to Fitzgerald (1961a:44) the age-old customs of venerating the dead and the passages in the Classics about sage kings enjoying an intimacy with Shang Ti, the Lord on High, point to an early belief in some form of personal immortality.

No certainty exists as to when the soul is irrevocably transformed into either a Yin or a Yang spirit due to the lack of proper offerings and thereby has its eternal fate sealed.
The emphasis placed on the observance of ancestral offerings in order to transform the soul of the deceased into either a spirit or a ghost, places all the responsibility on the living. This utterly materialistic approach to the eternal future of a soul rules out the neccesity of the individual having to live a moral life.

4.3.5.3 The non-restricted hun soul

The Li Chi contains at least one reported funeral speech in which the belief was enunciated that the bones and flesh return to the earth but the hun soul is able to 'go everywhere' (de Groot

1972;4:5).
This ability of the hun soul to 'go everywhere' has become deeply ingrained in the religious psyche and practice of the Chinese, as evidenced in the ceremonies for the 'calling back of the soul' and the burial of the disembodied spirits.

The Chinese have traditionally insisted that their deceased be buried in the ancestral burial grounds. Should the body be lost or should it prove an impossible task to return the corpse to its ancestral village, the soul could be 'called' or 'evoked' to return home for burial. Specific rites for such a burial appeared in certain books of the later Han dynasty (AD 25-220) although the practice itself dates back to the early Han dynasty (de Groot 1972;3:847-854).

The legendary Fu Shun is credited with the view that a disembodied soul should be lodged in a spirit tablet and not in a a tomb. His antagonists insisted on a burial site in order that the rites associated with filial piety may be practised.

Many Chinese in South Africa still believe in these rites. An example of 'evoking the spirits' may be found in King (1974:139-140). This particular case involved a Johannesburg burial in which the soul was not properly 'led back' to her Johannesburg home. An adapted form of the usual rites had to be conducted by relatives. The other case (vide: Appendix A) also involved a funeral in Johannesburg. The widow felt it was her duty to return to her husband's ancestral home in China in order to participate in an 'inviting **home** of the soul' ceremony. She followed the customs of her late husband's village which did not require that the soul should be called back for burial in a tomb. The ceremony is usually referred to in Hakka as **tzo tzai** (to conduct a religious ceremony).

4.3.5.4 Taoist eschatology

Important aspects of the Taoist beliefs concerning the destination of the soul may be found in their authoritative book known as the **Kan Ying Pien** (Book of Rewards and Punishments) which was written by Ho Hung of the fourth century AD. Its readers were instructed that whoever sought heavenly immortality must establish a claim to 1300 good deeds (Webster 1971:19). To the Taoist, the soul undergoes a type of chemical process which transmutes its matter into a still more ethereal substance, thereby preparing it for removal to one of the stellar paradises, or to the condition of the genii who live unseen in green forests, or on the lofty mountains of the Kun Lun range (Webster 1971:4).

Crimes which involved morals, religion and inhuman treatment of others drew punishment of the curtailing of life by twelve years or one hundred days. Should any crimes remain unpunished, the sentence was visited upon the descendants in the form of loss of property and loved ones, who themselves may experience various troubles (Webster 1971:27).

4.3.5.5 The influences of Buddhism

The destination and status of the soul in the hereafter were further affected with the introduction of Buddhism into Chinese society during the Han dynasty. By the third century of the present era, the traditional theory of the two souls was supplemented by imported Buddhist notions of the after-life. These notions included the need for souls to undergo trial and punishment in a purgatory before being reborn in a form commensurate with the type of life and actions of its previous existence. In fact, one of the chief functions of the Buddhist priests in China was to say prayers for the release of souls from their version of purgatory (Thompson 1969:11).

The concept of the cessation of the soul after untold periods of transmigration has its followers in China. This doctrine of the Hinayana form of Buddhism was incorporated into the sinicized teaching of purgatory and rebirth. The Mahayana school of Buddhism adopted the belief in a continued personal existence which is dependent upon the type of life lived in the present life. Chinese Buddhism separated the afterlife into the two states of heaven and hell.

According to Soothill (1923:179-180) the Mahayana doctrines teach that the soul is either in heaven or in hell, and the Buddhist priest is able to obtain its release. This claim is similarly made by the Taoist priests. It is further possible for the Buddhist in the present life to work towards the salvation of his soul and to assure for it a place in heaven by means of good practices, devotional observances, with the aid of the cult of Kuan Yin, the Buddhist Goddess of mercy. Repetition of the name, 'Amitabha' further aids the individual to work towards his eternal bliss.

Amitabha is the ruler of the Western paradise, to which the setting sun travels with the souls of the dying. All who think piously of his heaven, the Happy Land, will have a vision of him at death and be translated to the Happy Land where they will remain to enjoy every delight until they enter into Nirvana (Pike 1951:15).

4.4 THE SPIRIT TABLET IN THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

According to Cheng (1973:51) the inscription on the tablet which was placed inside the Temple of Heaven read, 'Emperor of Heaven - Shang Ti'. The wording on this tablet has theological implications in that the emperor worshipped or revered Shang Ti, the 'emperor above'. The Chinese emperors were bound to offer reverence to the Supreme Being, who was the equivalent of the Almighty God of the Judaeo-Christian traditions. The 'Terms'

controversy was echoed in a literary debate between W J Boone and J Legge (Legge 1971) on the proper rendering of the words Elohim and Theos and the notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits.

The emperor also had to offer reverence and sacrifices to the predecessors of the throne, whether they were of his own family or not. In some ways the latter rites may be likened to the honouring of the founder of a professional guild. This approach may be seen in the tradition of adopting a patron saint for an organization. The fact that Confucius was adopted as the patron of learning and Kuan Yin as the Goddess of mercy indicates the high level of their acceptance and also the recognition of their exceptional contributions in their respective areas of influence.

4.4.1 The origin and description of the spirit tablet

It was during the Chou period, probably circa 350 BC that the custom began of erecting tablets to the dead (Smith 1970:77). P Chao (1983:112) stated that the spirit tablet has been in use since the Hsia dynasty (c.2205-1766 BC).

The practice of 'canonising' an individual has been traced to the heroic acts and the subsequent death of a faithful royal servant whose unfortunate death led to the memorial tablet being honoured with the daily burning of incense (Burkhardt 1981;3:33).

The Chinese have traditionally believed that the soul of the deceased ancestor actually takes up its permanent residence in the wooden tablet after the soul has been ceremoniously led home from the cemetery by the eldest son or some close male relative in the absence of a son.

King (1974:160) referred to the tablet as a plaque but it is also referred to as a soul, spirit or ancestor tablet.

The tablet consists of a length of red-painted timber, measuring approximately thirty centimetres by ten centimetres and has the name of the deceased painted on it in black. According to Chao (1983:113) the tablet is always of wood to resemble man in his growth and decay. The height of the tablet must be twelve **ts'un** (inches) to represent the twelve months and four ts'un in width to denote the four seasons. The place where it is kept may vary from a shelf in a prominent place in the house to an inconspicuous corner of a room. The tablet is removed from the home after the third to the fifth generation (Freedman 1958:82) usually for reasons of space. The tablets are usually transferred to a temple or the ancestral hall.

The soul tablet has as its main purpose the provision of an artificial body for the weakened soul, which has been described as being in an 'unsubstantial state' (de Groot 1972;1:71). The ritual of inviting the soul to inhabit the tablet and the 'dotting' of the tablet, may be consulted in de Groot (1972;1:73-74,216) and section xiv, in the I-Li (Steele 1966;2:124-125).

An altar suggests a piece of furniture specifically set apart for the practice of certain religious rites. In practice the terms ancestor shrine, ancestor altar, shelf or god-shelf refer to the specific place in a home where ancestor rites are observed and where the gods are also worshipped.

4.4.2 The erection of spirit tablets for non-ancestors

Although tablets are customarily prepared for one's parents, hence the term 'ancestor tablets', it is nevertheless possible for tablets to be erected for one's children under certain circumstances. The writer is of the conviction that such tablets should not be called 'ancestor tablets' but rather 'memorial tablets' for obvious reasons. The use of the term 'ancestor tablet' for one's own children does not stand logical scrutiny at

all.

4.4.2.1 Tablets for sons

In the Republic of China, a son who dies after surviving his early childhood is automatically admitted to the ancestor shrine. The same privilege is extended to a married son, with or without children.

4.4.2.2 Tablets for daughters

Daughters do not share the same privileges as the sons because their lineage is established through their marriage. They may only be represented on the father's family altar in one of two ways: by having married a man who agreed to reside uxorially. The other circumstance involves her death as a spinster, when her soul is represented not by a tablet but by a small red sachet of incense ashes. After the funeral the sachet is placed in a little basket to which is attached a section of bamboo that serves as an incense burner. This latter option was practised in Ch'i-nan and San-hsia districts in the present Republic of China.

The families chose such baskets and hung them where they could not be easily seen in their homes. The reason for this discrimination against daughters is based on the belief that from birth daughters '...don't belong to us ...they should die in other people's houses' (Wolf 1974:148-149). Another way for an unmarried deceased daughter to have an ancestor tablet erected is for her parents to find a married man with children to accept her as a ghost bride. According to the usual contract drawn up in such cases, his children would have to worship her as if they were her own (Wolf 1974:150-151).

4.4.2.3 Infants and children do not qualify

Among some Chinese, the death of a child will cause it to be

reckoned as being the oldest of the siblings. Its spirit could receive the worship of the siblings although the spirit will not be enshrined as an 'ancestor' on a proper altar.

The greatest discrimination however, is reserved for the infant whose death is considered as a sign that the child was an evil spirit or someone who had returned from a previous life to dun the family for a debt. The rationale behind this attitude is based on the traditional insistence that ancestor worship is an act of obeisance that can only be properly performed by a junior for a senior. The deceased infant is therefore considered as a 'stranger' to the family and the body is not to be buried near other members of the family (Wolf 1974:147).

When a family unit is divided, the younger brothers may make identical copies of the eldest brother's family tablets for which he is responsible. Nelson (1974:263) reported that such copies were set up and were 'worshipped' independently by the families of the younger brothers.

4.5 THE ROLE OF FENG-SHUI IN THE ANCESTOR CULT

4.5.1 The basis of Feng-Shui

The rationale of Feng-Shui is that man may help improve his own fate by determining the workings of nature and then bringing his own actions into accord with them (Thompson 1969:21).

The harmonious flow of the ch'i, the vital force of the universe, must not be impeded or interrupted any way. Interruptions can affect the fate of the living and the dead and it is for this important reason that the siting of homes and graves is such a crucial matter to many Chinese.

The concept of Feng-Shui is a method of divination in which natural elements are taken into account to locate the most

auspicious site for the erection of a home, whether for the living or the dead. The theory was evolved out of the 'inner consciousness' of the Chinese and encompasses a complete system of natural science which governs their every action. The impiric practice of Feng-Shui does not yield results capable of proof by Western standards, but this theory does preserve 'a spirit of sacred reverence' for the divine powers in nature (Burkhardt 1981;2:137).

The concept of Feng-Shui also extends to the choice of lucky days for the commencement or consummation of any of the important undertakings of life; the casting of horoscopes for purposes of betrothal, and many of the rites connected with marriage (Webster 1971:5)

Basic to the understanding of Feng-Shui are its philosophical and cosmological tenets which include the following:
The creation of all things may be traced to the Absolute Nothing evolving into the Great Absolute. When this action occurred the breath and vital energy congealed to produce the male element known as the Yang, and when the process rested, the female principle Yin was brought into being.

The continuous activity and inactivity of these two energy modes in turn produced all things, including the Heaven above and the earth beneath. The alternating motion and pause further produced all the living and non-living forms, such as people, animals, vegetation, and minerals.

The perpetual energy produced by the Yang and the Yin is known as the ch'i or breath of nature. The operation of the ch'i is based on **li** (set laws) which in turn can be illustrated by diagrams which show the **shu** (numerical proportions of the universe). Both the form and the **ying** (form and appearance of nature) can be recognized by the human eye. These four manifestations, the ch'i, the li, the shu and the ying constitute the major elements

in the Feng-Shui system (Burkhardt 1981;2:138).

4.5.2 Attitudes towards Feng-Shui

Some writers have not been complimentary about Chinese geomancy, as Feng-Shui is inadequately termed in English. The following two authors are representative of those who do not believe in this type of divination.

The cosmological-philosophical concepts outlined above were not even considered by Grosier (1972:136) who lightly dismissed the whole concept as 'another superstition of the Chinese and perhaps one of the most absurd of which human nature is capable'.

Tan (1979:7-8) described Feng-Shui as a Taoist belief which was incorporated into the cult of ancestor worship. The residence of the dead must harmonize with the local 'current' of the Yin-Yang harmony which if disturbed, will adversely affect the fate of the deceased. As a Christian, Tan interpreted this belief as 'unscriptural' on two counts: the fate of the deceased cannot be affected by the siting of the grave and the Taoist cosmology contradicts the Biblical doctrine of creation.

Other writers tend to be non-judgemental about this belief which is important to many Chinese. Yang (1957:273-274) described Feng-Shui as one of the efforts of the Chinese to glean information from the secrets of Heaven and fate, as interpreted in the portents from extraordinary phenomena of nature. Feng-Shui has also been defined as a 'specialized religion' because it possesses an independent status and organization to serve specifically religious functions though it may perform many derivative functions also. This specialized religion does not possess an ethical system of its own other than that derived from Confucianism (Yang 1957:279-280).

4.5.3 The 'geomancy of burial': mutual caring involved

The ancestor cult has two faces, according to Freedman (1966:140-142). The one face is the worship of ancestors and the other face he has termed the 'geomancy of burial'. Each face of the cult presents a distinct configuration of attitudes towards the dead and has different implications for behaviour between agnates.

He also proposed an interesting interpretation of the 'two separate guises' of each forebear. A parallel is drawn between the dominance of the deceased father as an ancestor when worship is offered, and the dominance of the son in the siting of the tomb with the aid of Feng-Shui. The bones of the ancestors in the tomb and the ancestor tablets at home form opposite and complementary parts of the cult of the ancestors. In the worship of the ancestors, the offsprings speak highly of their ancestors and depend upon them for any benefits which might accrue from the accumulated merit during their ancestors' lifetime.

In this aspect the ancestors are active in caring for their offsprings and will not capriciously cause them harm. In the 'geomancy of burial' the ancestors are 'passive pawns' in the hands of their descendants. As long as their bones have been made comfortable and the site chosen had been adjusted according to the principles of Feng-Shui blessings will flow as a matter of course. If however the siting of the tomb or the adjustments have not been properly done, the resulting disasters will fall on the living.

Freedman (1966:141) also ascribed Yin characteristics to the ancestors in their skeletal state. As bones they are of the earth, passive and retiring. On the other hand the ancestors in their tablets have Yang characteristics in that they have affinities with Heaven, are active and are outgoing. 'Feng-Shui handles Yin and ancestor worship, Yang.'

4.5.4 Filial piety: motives of the offsprings

The belief that the cosmic forces influence man's destiny as practised in Feng-Shui does affect the descendant's motives in practising filial piety while his parents are alive and observing ancestor rites when they are dead. The relationship between ancestor and descendant appears to be mutually dependent and mutually beneficial. The descendant sustains the ancestor with mock or grave money, housing, clothes, incense, food and drink. The ancestor is also remembered and shown appreciation and respect on special occasions, including the ancestor's birthday, death anniversary and on other cultic and calendrical occasions such as New year and the feast of the Hungry Spirits.
The descendant expects a certain measure of blessing to flow from the display of his filial piety.

The ability by the ancestors to punish or to help their offsprings is dependent on the measure of influence they have with the supernatural beings. The ancestors will only inflict punishment on the offsprings for a limited number of reasons, viz: the neglect of the ancestors, if ancestors are personally offended by some lapse of family conduct which reflects on them and the cardinal failure to provide them with a secure line of descent (Freedman 1966:151).

In non-funerary circumstances, Feng-Shui also refers to the fate or fortuitous circumstances which befall an individual. The writer often heard his parents and their peers speak of an individual's Feng-Shui in the sense of his present level of bane or blessing. A person's Feng-Shui was spoken of as being good or bad.

4.6 FESTIVALS RELATED TO THE ANCESTOR CULT

The birth and death anniversaries of the ancestors are important

days when special offerings are provided to show that they are remembered by their offsprings. The sacrificial aspect of the cult of the ancestors has however, been weaved into many other public festivities as well; some of which are of calendrical and historical importance while others share an agrarian or mythical origin.

For example, the Festival of cold food which is observed sometime in the third lunar month has a historical basis. The ancestor cult plays a minor role in this festival. Mention is made of paper pennants placed on graves of the ancestors in the An-lu-fu district at this festival (Chao 1983:176). The reasons for the pennants are not clear and may have had a purely local significance.

Calendrical celebrations include the New year festival, when people express their wishes for a year of good fortune and peace. As a child the writer was not allowed to mention the lack of anything during the new year celebrations. It was also traditional that all outstanding accounts had to be settled before the last day of the old year. This practice has been maintained by some South African Chinese families. Ancestors are especially remembered at this time as it is considered a time for family reunion.

The writer is indebted to the social anthropologist Paul Chao, for his useful and concise material on the Chinese festivals. A number of references to his work appear below.

4.6.1 New Year Festivities

Traditionally, the head of the home leads his family in waking up early on New Year's day. After washing and putting on their new clothes, the family gathers in the main room to pay homage to their ancestors. The head of the family lights the candles on the ancestor shelf and then three incense sticks which he holds

between his hands with palms against each other. He raises his hands to his forehead and then places the incense sticks into the incense burner. He then kneels before the table on which various types of food and drinks are displayed and kowtows towards the ancestor tablets which Chao (1983:175) called ancestor 'scrolls'. All the males of the family perform the same ritual.

Early on the third morning of the new year, the family observe the **sung-tsu** (bidding farewell to the ancestors) ceremony.

4.6.2 The Lantern Festival

The Lantern Festival, which is celebrated on the fifteenth of the first lunar month, coincides with the first full moon. The family hangs a brightly coloured lantern in the **tze kung t'hong** (ancestral hall) and places a small lamp in every corner of the house as well as the outside areas such as the barn, the backyard and the patio area in order to symbolize 'brightness' and good fortune by driving away darkness which is associated with bad luck (Chao 1983:175).

4.6.3 The Spring Festival of Ch'ing Ming

At the commencement of Spring the festival of **Ch'ing Ming** (Clear and Bright) is observed. It is the first great festival after the New Year and as it is celebrated at the beginning of the third lunar month, the weather is bright, warm and savours of Spring. It is a time when both common and family ancestors are remembered.

The common ancestors belong to the whole clan and in China are honoured at least twice a year in the Spring and Autumn. The Johannesburg Chinese refer to the bi-annual visits to the graves as **Hung Cheng** in Cantonese and **Chee Chiang** in Hakka. These occasions call for the clan to tidy the graves of the ancestors and to offer food, drink, incense and mock money. The food is

offered on the ground or on a stone table in front of the tomb (Chao 1983:176). The Spring festival is also descriptively known as 'the sweeping of the graves'.

4.6.4 The Autumn Festival of Shui I

The Autumn Festival is known as **Shui I** (Burning of Clothes). The purpose of this particular rite is to transfer to the world of the dead, suitable warm clothes for winter. The means whereby this transfer is affected is by burning. For convenience, and for economic reasons, items burnt in the brazier are all made of paper. Thus paper clothes and shoes with the accompanying accessories such as paper picture watches. Special mock toiletry items are burnt when offerings are made to the female spirits.

In the traditional Chinese community, the clan supplemented the the family in carrying out the ancestor ceremonies in these annual public rituals which commemorate all the clan ancestors. According to Welty (1963:193) most orthodox families only honour the preceding four or five generations.

4.6.5 Dragon Boat Race Festival and the Summer Solstice

The Dragon Boat Race Festival and the Summer Solstice share the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. The Dragon Boat race re-enacts the historical attempt of a search party sent to hunt for the body of the scholar and minister Ch'u Yuan who served Ch'u Huai Wang (328-299 BC) as administer of the Chu state. According to the legend, he was accused of disloyalty by his colleagues because they were jealous of him. In desperation the minister drowned himself in the river Mi-lo when even his ruler refused to believe him. The sovereign later decreed that on the fifth day of the fifth month a memorial ceremony should be performed. The Dragon Boat race was instituted to serve as that memorial.

The calendrical importance of this date lies in the fact that it co-incided with the occurrence of the Summer Solstice, which to the Chinese had special cosmological implications. The term **tuan wu** (moment of confrontation) refers to the precise moment when the cold of the Yin season confronts the warmth of the Yang season. In other words, this is the period of the year when summer gains the upper hand in the northern hemisphere. The ancestors receive sacrifices of various kinds of meats to show the respect of the descendants (Chao 1983:177). The auspiciousness of the cosmological occurrence provides the traditionalist with yet another opportunity to participate in the ancestor cult.

4.6.6 The Winter Solstice

The winter solstice near the end of the lunar year required that each family prepare a special dish as an offering to the family ancestors.

4.6.7 New Year's Eve Festival; Kitchen God's farewell

Another end-of-year festival is the New Year's eve or the Farewell offering for the Kitchen God who leaves the house to report on the family's behaviour to the Supreme Deity before the new year begins. To prosper him on his way, the family cooks him and his wife a dinner which includes something sweet in order that sweet things may be reported of the family. The ancestors also receive sacrifices during that night (Chao 1983:181).

4.6.8 La Pa Chieh Festival

A classic example of an agrarian-based festival is the **La Pa Chieh**, (the Eighth day of the Twelfth month or the Chia Ping). A more descriptive name is **Pa Ch'a** (the festival of the Eight Genii or Spirits) which provide protection against locusts and grasshoppers. The eight genii also protected the hunters. This

festival was possibly instituted during the hunting and early agrarian periods of Chinese civilisation. A special **la pa chou,** (an eight cereal gruel mixed with dates) was prepared and sacrificed to the ancestors (Chao 1983:181).

4.6.9 The Festival of the Hungry Ghosts

The Festival of the Hungry Ghosts is one of the most important festivals relating to the ancestor cult. Its importance may be gauged by the social and religious influences which Buddhism has brought to bear on the practice of Confucian filial piety.

Other names such as **Chung Yuan** and **Yu Lan Hui** (Festival of the Hungry Ghosts) have also been identified with the festival (Chao 1983:180). The family ancestor spirits return home and visit their living descendants on that day when rice, incense, paper money, fruit, wine and meat are offered to the spirits.

4.6.9.1 The most basic purpose of this festival

The most basic purpose of this festival is to provide food for the ancestor spirits which may have been neglected and which may cause hardships on the living whether relatives or strangers. The food provided for these spirits on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month (usually August) is supposed to keep them satisfied for a year. This community effort may be interpreted as one motivated by a measure of self-interest, or taking preventative action or more magnanimously, as an act of genuine concern for the welfare of the neglected ancestor spirits.

The spirits of the ancestors in the Buddhist purgatory are released once a year, always occuring during the seventh lunar month.

4.6.9.2 Private ancestor ceremonies

Private family ancestor ceremonies are held on the eve of the full moon in the seventh month, when paper clothing and mock ignots of silver and gold are burnt. The wealthier families sacrifice tea, three pairs of chopsticks and some small bowls containing food and also drinks. The communal religious ceremonies take place towards the end of the moon before the ghosts are re-incarcerated after their holiday. The Boat people have the food, mainly dumplings, cast into the water to feed the hungry ghosts after the appropriate prayers had been said by the priests (Burkhardt 1981;2:52-59).

4.6.9.3 The Buddhist origin of the festival

The significant Buddhist influence in this festival is traced to the Yu-lan-p'en Sutra, which Tsung Lin (498-561) recounted in his Record of Seasonal Observances in Ching-ch'u. The sutra gave rise to the mythical origin of the festival, which popularly understood, means 'the bowl (**p'en**) filled with offerings to save ancestors from hanging upside-down (**yu-lan**) in purgatory'.

The sutra contains the account of how Mu-lien saw his departed mother reborn among the hungry ghosts. Out of pity and filial piety he filled his bowl with rice and sent it to his mother as an offering but the food changed into flaming coals before she could put the food into her mouth. When Mu-lien remonstrated with the Buddha, he was informed that her sins were grave and that as an individual there was nothing he could do about it. If he relied on the mighty spiritual power of the assembled monks 'of the ten directions', seven generations of ancestors and others in distress would experience release from purgatory. The merit could be gained only if 'food of the one hundred flavours and five kinds of fruit' were placed in a bowl and offered to the Buddhist monks, nuns, lay and other religious persons at the various temples and monasteries. The Buddha decreed that the

food should only be given after the assembled monks had chanted prayers on behalf of seven generations of ancestors of the donor (Teiser 1986:47-48).

It is possible that the origin of this particular Buddhist sacrifice may have had the more mundane needs of the religious community in mind rather than the spiritual welfare of seven generations of ancestors of each donor.

4.6.10 The three place settings in ancestral sacrifices

The practice of offering three of certain items to the ancestors requires a comment. The lighting of the incense sticks requires that three be lit at a time. When food is offered to the ancestors, the tray is usually set for three places - thus three rice bowls, three pairs of chopsticks, three glasses and three tea cups. King (1974:158) noted the possibility that of the three place settings, one was for T'ien, or Heaven, the Supreme Deity, one for Ti or Earth, and one for **Ren** (Man): these three represent the cosmological triad.

4.6.11 A Confucian perspective of sacrificial rites

In considering the various festivals and the necessary sacrifices of food and drink to the ancestors, the question of the underlying purpose for such sacrifices needs to be considered. While the ordinary person in the village may consider the sacrifices as being truly efficacious in their attempts to placate the spirits of their ancestors, the Confucian scholar harbours a different perspective.

Cheng (1973:52) commented as follows: 'Ancestor worship is not due to superstition or meant to immortalize the ancestors, but is, in its essence, to foster filial affection, whereby other virtues may be attained....'
However, it was Hsun Tzu (ch 19) who stated that:

> The sacrificial rites originate in the emotions of remembrance and longing for the dead... Hence the sacrificial rites originate in the emotions of remembrance and longing, express the highest degree of loyalty, love, and reverence, and embody what is finest in ritual conduct and formal bearing. Only a sage can fully understand them. The sage understands them, the gentleman finds comfort in carrying them out, the officials are careful to maintain them, and the common people accept them as custom. To the gentleman they are a part of the way of man; to the common people they are something pertaining to the spirits.
>
> (Watson 1967; Hsun Tzu:109-110)

4.7 AN ASSESSMENT: THE ANCESTOR CULT IN CHINA

As a result of the careless use of related terms, 'ancestor worship' has become synonymous with the larger phenomenon of the cult of the ancestors.

One of the guidelines used by the present writer to describe the ancestor cult in China in this study has been the judicious use of the term 'ancestor worship' only in contexts which genuinely referred to worship and in quotations from source materials. The term 'veneration' has been the preferred term of the writer.

4.7.1 The basic plan followed in this chapter

The cult of the ancestors in China has its roots in the ancient past as attested by references to it even in pre-Confucian writings. In an attempt to trace the origin of the cult, it was necessary first to examine the nature of Chinese religion for two basic reasons: the need to understand why Chinese religion has

developed the way it has and to search for the link between the ancient religious beliefs and the possible origin of the cult of the ancestors.

The development of religious practices in China is based on two important and typical emphases: the eclectic-syncretistic tendencies and the social model which have continued to be followed to the present time. The most obvious form of these tendencies continues to be followed in the close association with which many traditional Chinese succeed to maintain in combining Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in their rites of passage.
The other emphasis is the social model followed in Chinese religion. This is especially evident in the composition of the Taoist pantheon as well as the strong appeal to the clan and family structure.

The search for links which could join the ancient beliefs to the origin of the ancestor cult proved more difficult than expected. Literary sources to this ancient period are limited but the debate on the meaning of 'Heaven' provided some useful insights into the relationship which existed between the family form of ancestor reverence and the type of reverence shown to the great source of all life, T'ien. The oracle bones helped to serve as useful artifacts which tied the divination of the will of T'ien to the filial obedience of the emperor.

The second part of this study on the ancestor cult in China sought to outline its practice. The greater measure of religious freedom which the Chinese on the Mainland have enjoyed during the past decade under Chairman Deng Hsiao-ping has allowed a growing recurrence of the traditional ways of worship. The practice of traditional Chinese religious rites has been unrestricted on the island of Taiwan and other major areas in the Far East.
Although the minor details of the ancestral rites tend to differ according to different localities, the basic religious and moral principles outlined in chapter four have been universally

practised for many centuries.

The importance of the nuclear family and its wider association within the clan is essential in the infrastructure of the ancestor cult, for it is within these confines that each 'family' puts into practice the 'cult' which encompasses much more than the pious veneration or remembrance or even 'worship' of the ancestors. The moral preparation of the young for ancestor veneration occurs with the inculcation of filial piety. The respect which is taught within the family circle is broadened to incorporate the community and the world at large. This concept of the ideal universal morality was most clearly stated in the True Commonwealth of Confucius (Cheng 1973:89).

However, the reverence which the individual shows towards his own family is never shared outside his family and his clan.

The importance of filial piety continues to be deeply impressed upon the minds of the young. It is not difficult to make the transition from being filial to the parent in this life to be filial to his spirit in the next life. The offerings made to the spirits can be said to be similar to the food, drinks, clothing and a home given to the parents in this life. It is partly for this reason that the writer describe filial piety as the vehicle of the ancestor cult.

4.7.2 Syncretism: the main cause of uncertainty

A certain measure of uncertainty prevails on the exact destination of the soul after death. This uncertainty may be traced to the Chinese tendency to be syncretistic. Confucianists tend to be rationalistic and do not readily believe that the soul continues to exist after death. The Buddhists have their own beliefs about transmigration while the Taoists strongly believe in their eternal rewards after death. The combining of these three differing religious viewpoints has necessitated the

'pragmatic' Chinese to ensure the best possible eternal destiny for their loved ones.

In the spirit of continuing eclecticism and to some extent, syncretism, Buddhist and Taoist priests are called in to administer the funerary rites when the family is able to afford the expenses. It is not uncommon for relatives of those who considered themselves as true Confucianists also to seek the spiritual assurances from the Buddhist and Taoist clergy for their loved one's eternal welfare.

The spirit tablet which serves as the abode of the ancestor's spirit in the home, has a parallel in the tablet which was placed in the Hall of Heaven where the emperors used to make offerings to T'ien whose tablet contained the simple inscription: 'Shang T'i'. The primary implication of this inscription is that the Chinese worshipped the equivalent God of the Jews or of the Christians. Legge (1971:50) noted that Emperor Shun, the most famous of the legendary rulers of China prior to 2205 BC sacrificed to Shang T'i. The secondary implication of the Shang T'i inscription indicates that the basic rites of the ancestral cult had already been in use very early in China's history.

4.7.3 Parallels to the Chinese cult of the ancestors

The Chinese cult of the ancestors has its counterpart in the African ancestral cult in which death is considered the departure of the soul to join the company of the departed. In a sense, the deceased returns home to be with his ancestors after his life's pilgrimage (Mbiti 1969:157). Certain similarities exist between the two ancestor cults. The deceased are interested in the well-being and continuing existence of their relatives on earth, and the ancestors wish to be remembered. Pretorius and others (1987:120) claimed that this wish to be remembered was in fact the very basis of ancestral veneration. The 'bringing home' ceremony of the African ancestor cult also has its counterpart in

the Chinese ceremony of the 'inviting home of the soul'.

4.7.4 Confucian pragmatism

The Chinese cult appears to be a relatively well-developed system although upon analysis, certain of the eschatological aspects seem to have been weakened by the admixture of Buddhist and Taoist elements. The moral lessons which are deducible from the concept and practice of filiality are commendable. The differences which underlie the Confucian reason for sacrifices and the moral value of such sacrifices appear to be based on the principle that the end justifies the means.

5.0 THE JOHANNESBURG CHINESE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

A brief account of the early role of Protestant Christianity on the Chinese community in South Africa will help to set the historical background to the subject on hand. The literature on the religious development among the Chinese in South Africa prior to the period beginning with the 1900s is extremely scant and the information supplied in this section of the study was of necessity extracted from secondary sources. Information on the post-1900 period to the present was obtained from personal interviews and by means of postal surveys. A basic information sheet was drawn up and sent to leaders of the various churches with the request for specific information about their work.

5.1 PRE-1900 CHINESE PROTESTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since the establishment of the Dutch refreshments station at the Cape in 1652 till the twentieth century, only one definite conversion is on record of a Chinese person converting to Christianity and joining a Protestant Church. Very few Chinese were willing to venture so far from their home of their own volition until the political and economic situation in China forced many of them to seek employment outside of China during the later years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the present century.

5.1.1 The Cape during the Dutch occupation in the eighteenth century

Tuko was the first Chinese to be baptised in South African history. This historic event occurred at the Cape in 1702 and he became a member of the Reformed Church (Pineo 1981:205). Tuko who was officially known as Abraham de Vyf, was also referred to as 'Tuko de Chinees' in the official records. His plans to proceed to Batavia with his family was indicative that he had achieved a measure of prosperity at the Cape. His application to do this

was approved in 1710 but he died at the Cape in 1713 (Pineo 1985:211).

5.1.2 The Cape during the British occupation in the nineteenth century

When Thomas Talbot Harington, Captain of the Honourable East India Company's ship Scaleby Castle arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on the 26 May 1814, he had no official 'passengers' except his own family, and 'a House and Warehouse with everything appertaining thereto upon an extensive scale and of great value' (Brock & Brock 1976:86). According to Brock and Brock, his intention was to build a house and to establish a business at Simon's Town. To implement his twin ambitions, he also had on the ship as non-passengers, a whole complement of workers, including three masons and three carpenters, together with twenty-three Chinese craftsmen. This group was comprised of three carpenters, three masons, two stonecutters and fifteen farmers (1976:86).

After the British succeeded the Dutch as the imperial power at the Cape, the Royal Navy at Canton negotiated the indenture of twenty-four Chinese craftsmen to ply their various trades for a period of three years at the Cape. The party of thirteen masons, ten carpenters and one painter duly arrived in 1815 (SEOSA 1971; 3:197). According to another record (Brock & Brock 1976:87) twenty-five Chinese Artificers arrived at the Cape on 28 July 1815 from China. The company of craftsmen 'consisted of a Foreman, twelve ordinary masons, a Foreman and ten ordinary carpenters and one "carpenter and painter" '.

These records describe the arrival of the first two small contingents of Chinese workers from China to the shores of South Africa. These men were probably slipped onto departing ships from the port of Shanghai without the Chinese Government's official sanction, as it was only after the signing of the Peking Protocols in 1860 that the Chinese Government allowed Chinese

labourers to work overseas. This practice probably served as the origin of the phrase, 'to Shanghai' a person.

5.1.3 The Chinese labour experiment on the Rand during 1904-1910

The third significant period during which the Chinese came to South Africa occurred during 1904-1907 when a total of 63 296 miners were distributed to the mines from Durban (vide: ch 2.3.1.3.2 for further details).

Unfortunately the pro forma contracts did not require the listing of their religious affiliations nor has the researcher come across any records indicating that any of the miners were of the Christian persuasion. The writer met an elderly retired Christian evangelist in the early 1960s who had been engaged in evangelistic outreach to the Chinese miners. It was his sincere hope that many of the Chinese would convert to Christianity and return to China with religious tracts and portions of the Bible in order to share with others the Christian Gospel. The retired evangelist could not definitely account for any Chinese converts through his own ministry.

5.2 POST-1900 CHINESE PROTESTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

While missionaries were sent to the Far East by English and American missionary societies during the early nineteenth century, no effort appeared to have been made by the mainline Protestant churches to reach the growing Chinese community in South Africa with the Christian message. The uniqueness of Tuko's baptism in the eighteenth century in the Cape simply underscores the lack of evangelical interest in the Chinese in South Africa.

Modern missionary work and church planting amongst the South

African Chinese may be said to have commenced in 1918 when a few Anglican Sisters of St. Mark's Mission in Port Elizabeth showed concern over the lack of educational facilities in the local Chinese community. The other account in this section will relate the efforts of an American missioner to the Kimberley Chinese in the 1950s. His missionary work predates by a few years the commencement of Chinese Protestant Christianity in Johannesburg.

5.2.1 Saint Francis Xavier Church in Port Elizabeth

The history of the Anglican church's involvement with the Chinese in Port Elizabeth has been reasonably well documented. The congregation of St Francis Xavier in Kabega Park was originally established as a result of the educational ministry which was commenced among the Chinese in 1918 by the Sisters of St. Mark's Mission. The school commenced on 4 February 1918 with sixteen students in the rooms of the Chinese Association in Queen Street (Saint Francis Xavier Church 1986:1).

The humble beginnings of the school hid the epochal importance of the event, for that day saw the establishment of the very first Chinese school in South Africa.

5.2.2 Church of Christ Mission in Kimberley

An American by the name of William O Rees commenced a Church of Christ mission among the Kimberley Chinese either in 1950 or 1951. For a meeting place he hired the Chinese community centre which also housed the small Chinese school. A small group of about fifteen young people who were all under 18 years of age, met under his direction for Christian instruction and other youth activities. The Chinese adults showed no interest at all and did not attend any of their meetings or Sunday services. A small duplicated magazine 'The Chinese Lantern' was widely distributed throughout the country by Mr Rees.

The youthful nature of the group necessitated that the mission was organised and run entirely by the missioner. In time a church was built for the small congregation which by then consisted of Chinese and White members and adherents. When the Chinese and White members left the congregation because the church was situated too far from their residential areas, a Coloured congregation took over the building which was later sold (Interview Ho Chung (E):10.3.1989).

5.3 THE JOHANNESBURG CONGREGATIONS BRIEFLY DESCRIBED

This chapter will seek to reflect the history and nature of the various Protestant churches which were established during the past four decades in Johannesburg. An attempt will also be made to provide some background information concerning the special ministries which have been characteristic of each congregation. In order to facilitate the description of the various churches and para-church groups, the term 'congregation' will serve as a common descriptive term for the formally constituted churches as well as for the informally organized fellowships.

Johannesburg has by far the largest community of Chinese in South Africa. The challenge to reach this community of approximately 4 200 Chinese souls by the mainline churches has taken many years.

The establishment of Churches with a distinct ethnic orientation should not be interpreted as the practice of racial discrimination, whereby Chinese were to be excluded from membership or worship in the other churches. The overall intention was to facilitate the ministry of the Christian message in a particular environment in which a particular language was to be used in addition to English. The phenomenon of the 'South African born' Chinese with its distinct process of cultural assimilation was another important factor which had to be taken into account by the founders of the various ethnic churches and fellowships.

5.3.1 The Southdale Baptist Church

The Southdale Baptist Church located on the border of Turffontein West and Southdale was known as the Chinese Baptist Church from October 1955 to October 1978. From April 1954 to October 1955 the church served the community as the Chinese Christian Church.

5.3.1.1 From student meetings to church

The church had grown out of a small weekly student meeting which Mrs A S Rabie first organized in September 1952. Mrs Rabie was the senior Afrikaans teacher at the Johannesburg Chinese Kuo Ting High School. As the work grew, she called in many other speakers to help her minister to the students. Later, when religious instruction was placed on the school time-table because of the growing number of young Chinese Christians at the school, Mrs Rabie invited willing and dedicated men and women to help teach Scripture on a voluntary basis.

The development of a church out of a school meeting resulted from a simple and logical turn of events. Prior to that first end-of-year Christmas holiday, it was decided to try and conduct a regular Sunday morning Bible class in order not to disrupt the fellowship which had become a feature in the lives of many of the young students at the school. The school authorities were approached for permission to use the teachers' lounge for a Sunday morning meeting. This permission was granted (Song 1976:4). The small congregation met at this venue from 1953 to 1960 for their weekly worship services and some youth meetings on a Friday night.

The first formal entry in the official Church minute book (CMB) was made on 12 April 1954. The members of the Supervisory Committee consisted of the following interested evangelical churchmen and layworkers: Rev V F Thomas (Troyeville Baptist

church), Rev J L Green (Rosebank Union Church), Rev C W Parnell (Johannesburg Central Baptist Church); Mrs A S Rabie, Mr & Mrs H W Pudney, Mr & Mrs D Beaton (Snr); Mr & Mrs N Cliff, Mr N Song, Mr R Ho and Miss S Lai.

Rev V F Thomas served as the committee's first chairman until he accepted a call to the Pretoria Central Baptist church in 1955, when he was succeeded by Rev J L Green (CMB;1:26.6.1954).

5.3.1.2 Ferreirastown Sunday School

Quite unbeknown to the Chinese Christian Church until very late in 1954, another band of keen White Christians were labouring among the Chinese people in Ferreirastown, at the western end of Commissioner Street. From about 1946 to 1955 Mrs Barron, her daughter Nora, Miss Schneeburger and a Mrs White were involved in ministering to the young children of the 'Chinatown' area. Miss Schneeburger and Mrs White were members of the Johannesburg Central Baptist Church and the Barron family belonged to the United Apostolic church. Beginning with a roof-top Sunday School, this band taught about fifteen young people. Mrs J Bunn, the mother of some of the young people, took pity on the group as the weather was not always ideal, and invited them into her apartment for Sunday School.

Mr N Cliff joined the group a short while before it was disbanded. In 1955 the Ferreirastown Sunday School leaders very graciously withdrew and encouraged their young people to join the Chinese School group (Interview Sam: 15.9.1976).

5.3.1.3 Decision to join the Baptist Union

As the Sunday services continued at the Chinese school various speakers, both lay and ministerial as well as theological students from the Baptist Theological College in Parktown Johannesburg ministered to the small group of Chinese believers.

Its links with the Baptist denomination were strengthened when the leadership felt that for the sake of official recognition, the fledgeling church should join a mainstream denomination. Two important factors helped to tip the choice in favour of the Baptists: the Chinese had had close links with both Baptist clergy and lay people since the commencement of the work and the Baptists were considered 'conservative' in their worship and theology. The church leadership associated this conservative characteristic with the Chinese community. It was therefore decided to seek membership with the Baptist Union of churches.

At a special members' meeting held in the Staff lounge of the Chinese Kuo Ting High School on Sunday morning 2 October 1955, a unanimous decision was taken by the twenty-two persons present to apply to the Baptist Union for recognition as a member church (vide: Original Foundation Members' List CMB;1:2.10.1955). The application was immediately submitted to the Baptist Union Assembly which met at the Troyeville Baptist Church later that month. During the course of the Assembly, the small congregation of the Chinese Baptist Church was welcomed into the family of the South African Baptist Churches (South African Baptist Handbook 1955-6:101).

5.3.1.4 The move to the Central Baptist Church in Hillbrow

In 1959, four years after the congregation had become affiliated to the Baptist Union, objections were raised by a small number of Chinese that the community school premises were being turned into a Protestant church centre. Under these circumstances, the church was more than happy to accept the invitation of Rev C W Parnell, minister of the newly-erected Central Baptist Church in Hillbrow, to use one of its spacious halls for the Chinese services.

5.3.1.5 Purchase of church in 1975

The church continued to meet at the Central Baptist Church from February 1960 till the end of August 1975 when the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk in Turffontein West sold their building at cost to the Chinese Baptists. The first service which was held on Sunday 7 September 1975 was a service of dedication of the members to the Lord. The official thanksgiving service was arranged for the end of the month. The happy congregation, which included many well-wishers and supporters, was led by its minister Rev A Song in the thanksgiving service on Sunday 28 September 1975 to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the Church (Song 1976:19).

As the Chinese community is scattered in many Johannesburg suburbs, no suburb can truly be said to be 'central' to everyone. No matter where the church services are held, the majority of members and adherents have to travel a fair distance to attend church activities.

5.3.1.6 Ministerial history

The following ministers have served in the church: Rev Y H Au (1959-1961); Rev A Song (1963-1979), Rev H J R Campbell, (1971-1974) (Associate minister); Elder and assistant to the minister Mr S L Fok (since 1979), Rev J M Longstaff (1981-1983) and Rev L R N D'Aubrey (since 1985).

5.3.2 The Chinese Assembly of God

The Chinese Assembly of God congregation was established on the 28 October 1976 under the leadership of Pastor Sonja Botha, an ordained missionary in the Assemblies of God denomination. As a trained medical sister, she established the Happiness Chinese Creche in 1964 to assist the many Chinese working mothers with young children in the Doornfontein, Belgravia, Kensington and

other nearby suburbs. The contact with many unchurched and unevangelized Chinese families enabled the staff of the Happiness Chinese Creche to share the Christian message with the parents. In time a small Sunday school was commenced and the church itself gradually developed from it.

Since the inception of the Assembly of God work among the Johannesburg Chinese, the following pastors have been involved: Miss S Botha (since 1964); Mr V Lun (since 1979) and Mr W Loo in 1979 (Interview Botha: 12.11.1988).

5.3.3 The Chinese Christian Fellowship

The prime mover of this congregation was Mrs J Lee and her son Eddie, both originally from Cape Town. Mr I Liebenberg was also much involved in assisting the establishment of this group.

A need was felt in 1973 to start meetings in order to minister to the many Chinese whose spiritual needs were not being met in the other Chinese churches. The popularity of these meetings, which were originally known by the name of The Chinese Fellowship, necessitated moving out of Mrs Lee's home in 1975 into the more spacious Quacker House facilities in Bertrams, where this congregation continues to meet under a team leadership consisting of senior members of the Fellowship (Interview Chong (K): 26.3.1989).

5.3.4 The Church of Christ

The Church of Christ commenced its meetings and services in the home of Mr and Mrs J Ho in 1969 and when the congregation had grown too large after a year, the group hired a larger room in Doornfontein. After a while a hall was hired but because the congregation was multiracial, the church was asked to leave. From there the group met in a vacant shop in Doornfontein. Assisting in the work were Mr George Chong and Mr Edward Ho Chung, the

latter hailing originally from Kimberley where he was an active member of the Chinese Church of Christ. With the continued growth of the church, a house in Bertrams was hired and renovated to serve as a more permanent place of worship.

It was while the congregation used this venue for ten years that funds were collected to build their own sanctuary in Bezuidenhoutsvallei. During this time the congregation was predominently Chinese. By the time the congregation dedicated their new church building in 1984 in Bezuidenhoutsvallei the ethnic character of the church had changed to a predominently White church (Interview Ho Chung (F): 13.6.1989).

Although the church has continued its practice of employing American ministers, Mr George Chong serves as an elder and as the assistant minister (Interview Chong (G): 11.3.1989).

5.3.5 Chinese Anglicans

Chinese Anglicans do not all attend one particular 'ethnic' church but worship in churches of their choice. Although the exact number of Chinese Anglicans in Johannesburg is not known, the writer considers twenty five to be a fair number according to the replies received from a survey sent out to eight Anglican parishes in Johannesburg during April 1989.

5.3.6 Christian City

Pastor Theo Wolmarans founded the Christian City in 1979 in Johannesburg. Pastor Fred Leus, one of the co-pastors of this church, has been given the pastoral care of the forty-five Chinese who worship there. This has led to a weekly meeting of approximately thirty-five of this group at his home in Glenvista since November 1986 (Interview Leus: 21.6.1989).

5.3.7 Taiwanese Bible Study Group

Under the patronage of the incumbent Christian Consul-General of the Republic of China to South Africa, Mr W-J Hu, a fortnightly Bible Study Group meets in his home. The studies are conducted in the Mandarin dialect by Mr Hu, who also translates the messages of visiting speakers who use English. The group came into being at the beginning of 1989 and after six months numbers approximately thirty (Interview Leus: 21.6.1989).

5.4 AN ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE CONGREGATIONS

5.4.1 The Southdale Baptist Church

5.4.1.1 The adoption of a non-ethnic church name

When the church met for its quarterly meeting on 22 April 1978 (CMB;3:1978) a decision was taken to change the name of the church. It was however at the AGM of the church held on 1 October 1978 that the name 'Southdale Baptist Church' was proposed and accepted. The church was to retain much of its Chinese character.

A special ministry to the elderly in its community was to be launched, primarily to the Chinese to help meet their meagre old-age pensions and special social and health needs. Church members were simultaneously reminded to take cognisance of their spiritual responsibility to the neighbourhood in which the church is situated. The Church notice board carries the English name of Southdale Baptist Church but the old name 'Chinese Baptist Church of Johannesburg', has been retained in the Chinese characters.

The change in name was recommended by the minister (the present writer) on the basis that the stress on Chinese underlined the ethnicity of the majority of its members. As a growing number of non-Chinese from the Southdale and surrounding suburbs were also

attending the services, a non-ethnic name should be used. The writer recalls that he strongly recommended that the church should serve the whole community, as it was the only Baptist witness in the area. He noted that the New Testament churches were all named according to their geographical localities and not the ethnic make-up of the congregations.

5.4.1.2 A multiracial membership

In keeping with this non-racial emphasis of the church, the congregation at Southdale is not exclusively Chinese. The total number of adults in full membership on the 9 March 1989 was seventy-eight. Of this number, sixty-one are Chinese adults and the remainder are made up of Blacks, Indians, Coloureds and Whites.

The congregation contains both members and adherents. A further analysis of this combined group rendered the following information: Twenty males who are eighteen years and older as against fifty-eight females of the same age category. The church activities are also attended by thirty-seven young people under the age of eighteen. Eight pensioners also attend the services.

A number of the Chinese at the church were born overseas: of the ten who were born on the Mainland, six are under the age of fifty and four over the age of fifty. One person under fifty was born in Republic of China and another in the same age category was born in Hong Kong.

5.4.1.3 The involvement of the elderly

When asked how many senior citizens were involved on any church committees, it was reported that six were serving on the Christian Care for Elderly Chinese Committee, two were serving as church deacons and another two as Sunday School teachers.

The present minister is Rev L R N D'Aubrey who also supplied the information relating to Southdale Baptist Church (Interview D'Aubrey: 9 March 1989).

5.4.2 The Chinese Assembly of God

5.4.2.1 Ministry orientated to the Chinese

The Chinese Assembly of God is unashamedly 'Chinese' in character, as indicated in its weekly newsletters and also its promotional material. The church described itself in an advertisement as 'The church with the Chinese community at heart ...Ministry exclusively to the Chinese people' (South African Chinese Sports Association Easter Brochure; 1977:13).

It appears that the church sees itself as a mission church. This perspective is reflected in the existence of a relatively large leadership body for the medium to small church membership. According to the Chinese Assembly of God church news bulletin (30.10.1988) the leadership consists of the Pastor/missionary (Miss S Botha); the assistant Pastor (Mr V Lun); two White missionaries, (Misses D Pearmain and E Goosen): an elder (Mr R Ford) and a deacon (Mr L Lund); two secretaries (Misses C Chen Ming and M Sadler) a treasurer (Miss J Sun); a catering committee under the leadership of Miss E Lun and the Cantonese ministry co-ordinators (Mr V Lun and Miss E Lun).

5.4.2.2 Membership analysis

An analysis of the membership statistics shows that the 'mission staff' and 'missionaries' comprise seven of the forty-two members, the remaining thirty seven being Chinese. Of the members and adherents, twelve males are eighteen and older, while eighteen of the female members are eighteen and older.

The total number of Sunday School and youth fellowship members under the age of eighteen was reported as twenty-two (Interview Botha: 16.5.1989).

Six pensioners are also listed as either members or adherents. Nine members were born in the Far East; eight are over fifty and one under fifty years of age.

For the senior Chinese citizens, regular meetings are conducted in the Cantonese dialect in order to help meet their spiritual needs. The senior citizens also join with the Assembly for all their social activities (Interview Botha: 12.11.1988).

5.4.3 The Chinese Christian Fellowship

The congregation is not formally constituted and does not maintain membership records. The congregation claims not to have a Pastor or minister, but that the recognition of local leadership is vested in a group of 'senior members'. The congregation's leaders wish to retain the 'fellowship' identity and prefer that the congregation not be labelled a 'church'. Fifty adults attend the Tuesday evening service. Every Friday an intercessory prayer meeting is held at which the average attendance is twenty-five. The Breaking of Bread is observed every alternate Saturday when about thirty-five persons join in the service. The Sunday meetings are used for Bible study by a group of thirty (Interview Chong (K): 5.2.1988).

The total Sunday School and Youth membership under the age of eighteen number sixty (Interview Chong (K): 16.5.1989).

5.4.4 The Church of Christ

The Church of Christ has changed its ethnic character from being a predominently Chinese church in the 1960s to a mixed congregation of Whites and Chinese in the 1980s. The statistics furnished below are the 'book statistics'.

The Chinese membership stands at forty and the non-Chinese members number twenty-four. The figure for the Chinese who are

eighteen and older includes sixteen males and fourteen females. Ten young people under the age of eighteen also include children in the Sunday School. Only one person over the age of fifty was born in the People's Republic of China. It was also reported that no senior citizens are involved on any church committees.

The church is governed by an eldership and the incumbent minister is Rev D Messimer from the USA. The informant, Mr George Chong serves as an elder and as the assistant minister (Interview Chong (G): 11.3.1989).

5.4.5 Christian City

The predominently White but multiracial Christian City group in Johannesburg includes approximately forty-five Chinese who worship with them. The Church does not possess an infrastructure to cater for specific needs of the Chinese community. The youth members who live in and around Glenvista meet once a week in the home of the Pastor in charge of the Chinese members. The weekly fellowship meeting is not specifically arranged for Chinese people only but the activities indicate that the youth are its target group (Interview Leus: 21.6.1989).

In the section which follows, the status and role of the elderly members and adherents in the churches will be considered.

5.5 THE STATUS AND THE ROLE OF SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE CONGREGATIONS

The concept of filial piety incorporates the traditional respect for all those older than oneself. Of vital interest to this study are the responses of the Chinese Christian congregations to their elderly adherents and members. The manner in which the elderly are treated indicates the quality of filial piety that is corporately practised in the different churches.

5.5.1 Reasons for checking on the ministry to the elderly

Concomitant with the search for statistics and other forms of data relating to the different congregations, each church leader was also asked about special senior citizens programmes. The leaders were also asked what roles the senior citizens played in the congregations. It appears to the writer that the role of the elderly in the congregation is indicative of the measure of confidence which the church leadership has in the elderly. A church which values the advice and the influence of the elderly will therefore utilise their valuable experiences and insights in the wider ministry of the church.

5.5.2 Increase of elderly Chinese in churches

Two decades ago it was unusual to find Chinese senior citizens worshipping in Christian churches in Johannesburg. Church attendance then was left to the younger set who had attended church schools or who had imbibed the Christian faith at one or other non-church connected schools such as the Johannesburg Chinese Kuo Ting High School or White schools where a strong Christian witness was maintained.

The emphasis on the need to minister to the Chinese senior citizens over the past two decades has now borne fruit. It is no longer uncommon to find at least a few senior citizens worshipping in each of the larger congregation. In considering the status and role of senior citizens in the various congregations, the use of English as the main language in worship and the rather conservative nature of the older Chinese members are two important factors which need to be kept in mind.

5.5.3 Language fluency and church involvement

The level of involvement on the part of the senior citizens is dependent on their fluency in English on the one hand and the

role that the Chinese language plays in the service on the other hand. In a predominantly English speaking congregation, a person who is well-versed in Chinese but whose knowledge of the English language is limited, will find himself of little use in the leading of worship or in his capacity as a church committee member.

An elderly Chinese person who is fairly fluent in the English language may lack the spiritual maturity and knowledge of his relatively new-found faith to participate in any leadership role.

While the above statements are generally applicable, there are exceptions to both factors, due to the different make-up of individuals and congregations.

5.5.4 The pioneering work of Southdale Baptist Church

The Southdale Baptist Church has maintained a special ministry to the elderly in their own Cantonese Chinese dialect in order to overcome some of the language-related problems. Soon after the congregation moved into their own building in Southdale, a simultaneous translation system was installed whereby the non-English speaking Chinese could listen to the sermon being simultaneously translated for them through earphones. Special Bible study groups were arranged for them as well. It was to such services and special meetings that the more established members of the congregation felt free to invite their friends and relatives.

Among the more zealous Chinese speaking Christians were those who possessed leadership abilities. These individuals were soon recognized and their natural talents were put to use in visitation programmes as well as conducting simple Bible studies. On special occasions a small choir has been able to sing Christian hymns in Chinese at various functions. While very few of them are able even to hold a simple conversation in English

and fewer of them are literate in English, most of them are able to read the Bible in Chinese.

At Southdale a number of the more prominent Cantonese-speaking senior citizens have been involved on the Diaconate and committee level of church government. The occasional reading of the Chinese Bible in services and the teaching of scripture have also formed part of their responsibilities.

There are no Hakka or Mandarin senior citizens worshipping at Southdale at the time of writing (June 1989).

The majority of the elderly adherents and members tend to be participants only in the services. The love shown to them by the various church members elicits from such elderly men and women a response of gratitude and appreciation. They will therefore attend some services even though they may not understand much of what is said or done.

5.5.5 The cultural contributions by the elderly

Chinese Christians in Johannesburg face the task of practising their understanding of filial piety both as ethnic Chinese and also as Christians who seek to share the Gospel and their knowledge of the Bible with the elderly in their midst. For the comparatively younger Chinese who are leaders in their respective congregations, it is important not to underestimate the vast store of informally acquired knowledge as well as the wisdom inherent in the Chinese heritage of the Three Teachings which the elderly possess.

These teachings have been widely diffused for centuries in China and the elderly in Johannesburg, the majority of whom were born in China, would have been exposed to the Three Teachings in their own 'family upbringing'. The need to know something about the cultural heritage of the elderly can only be beneficial to any

aspiring evangelist who may desire to minister to the senior citizens. Ministry to the elderly therefore requires a combination of deep respect for their culture and a gentle boldness given by the Holy Spirit.

5.6 EFFORTS TO PROSELYTISE THE ELDERLY

5.6.1 The rationale of proselytising the elderly Chinese

Before the various efforts to proselytise the elderly are examined, a few thoughts on the rationale of proselytising the elderly Chinese need to be considered. This will enable a better assessment to be made of the efforts by the various churches to reach this target group.

5.6.1.1 Rationale based on a Biblical mandate

Two questions immediately spring to mind when the subject of conversion to another faith is mentioned: Why should people be encouraged to accept a different belief system, especially so late in life? The second question is a practical one: how should such a task be accomplished?

Whatever reasons may be forthcoming from those who seek converts to their faith, it must be acknowledged that the exercise requires certain sacrifices.

It is a time consuming and an expensive task to convince people of their need to accept a faith that is both foreign and demanding. Those involved in this task of 'evangelism', of sharing what they consider to be the 'good news' with others, must of necessity sincerely believe in what they wish others to believe. They would be hypocrites otherwise.

Their evangelistic zeal need to be based on a motivation more substantial than the mere desire to share what they construe to

be the 'good news'. Such people believe that they have a mandate from Christ to reach out to others who are not 'saved'. This mandate they believe, is found in the teachings of Christ (John 3:16 GNB; Luke 15:11-32 GNB), in Christ's direct command to evangelize (Matthew 28;19-20 GNB) and it is illustrated in the example of the early church (Acts 2 GNB).

5.6.1.2 The factor of Christ's universal appeal

The ministry to the elderly Chinese who follow their traditional beliefs also rests on the basic presupposition that Christ is able to bring about change in the life of anyone, regardless of ethnicity, social status, age or gender. Another important presupposition takes into account the declining number of years left to any elderly person and therefore the need to 'reach them with the Gospel' before they die and enter a 'Christless eternity'.

That the elderly are too set in their ways to change is an argument which does not always hold water. It is true that a lifetime spent in practising and in some cases, not practising certain beliefs, makes it difficult to change one's beliefs and one's ways. Nevertheless, if individuals could be convinced that a different and a better way of life could be lived according to the Christian way, there is no reason why older people should not be expected to desire it.

The fact of the matter is that the Christian faith has indeed appealed to a large number of the elderly Chinese and they have shown their preparedness to try it. It could of course be argued that they would lose nothing by converting to the new faith, for their traditional beliefs are also an admixture of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. In other words, the syncretistic and eclectic nature of Chinese beliefs has made it easier for them to accept yet another faith.

A major difference must be distinguished between the individual's relationship with Christianity and his previous acceptance of the Three Teachings. In Christianity the convert needs to reject the other 'false religious beliefs' and embrace only Christ as Saviour and Lord. This complete dedication of the individual believer to Christ is publicly attested to in the rite of Christian baptism and participation in Holy Communion with his fellow believers.

It is important to note that the acceptance of Christianity does not mean the rejection of the ethical and moral content of the Three Teachings.

The writer served as minister of the Southdale (Chinese) Baptist Church from 1963-1979 and was privileged to have introduced the programme known as Christian Care for Elderly Chinese (CCEC) in 1976. Occasional references will of necessity have to be made to this organization as its unique combination of ministries continues to serve the community to the present. Certain aspects of the CCEC programme have become common practice in other churches. As the CCEC incorporates many of the ideal aspects of ministry to the elderly Chinese, its programme will be enlarged upon below.

5.6.2 The welfare needs of the elderly

One of the most significant memories which the writer possesses from working among the elderly Chinese in Johannesburg during the latter part of 1970s was their proud demeanor in the face of poverty. Many of them did not have offsprings to care for them and they managed somehow on the free meals provided for them by a few 'clubs' in Ferreirastown. These 'clubs' were in fact gambling groups organized by individuals and using certain restaurants as their venues.

Approximately twelve single elderly Chinese lived in

Johannesburg's so-called 'Chinatown'. The small bachelor rooms at the back of two old buildings, one of which has since been demolished, provided much of the residence for such elderly men and women. Some of the men's rooms were very untidy as they were not serviced. Curtains and blankets were minimal and these showed extreme lack of maintenance and cleanliness.

When they fell ill, the services of a nearby Chinese doctor were available for which they were not charged. This service was not often used as the elderly did not wish to 'trouble' others and be a 'nuisance'.

Because of the dire circumstances of many of the elderly, there were few if any opportunities for them to get out of their immediate surroundings in order to mix with other members of the community. Their traditional upbringing also made them feel ashamed to ask for welfare assistance from the official sources.

5.6.3 Social and religious programmes

It was against this background that the leadership of the Southdale Baptist Church was presented with the urgent need to become involved in a special programmme in which the elderly Chinese community could be assisted by means of a church-centred initiative.

5.6.3.1 The application of a Biblical principle

The minister of the church felt that to offer the proverbial cup of cold water in Christ's name (Mark 9:41 KJV) included looking after the elderly in a holistic manner. The teaching of Matthew 15:34-46 in terms of the individual believer's ministry to those in need as being done 'unto Christ' was also an important factor in the establishment of the organization, Christian Care for Elderly Chinese (CCEC).

According to the secretary, Mrs I B M Brown, the CCEC was started in January 1976 by a small group of interested people headed by Rev A Song. Originally the idea was to build an Old Age Home. However, the group saw that immediate need was more helpful to the elderly than a building project. Seven areas of assistance were listed in the report:

1. Pension applications.
2. Hospitals. Seniors are taken for check-ups or admissions.
3. Food parcels are distributed on a monthly basis.
4. Capil asbestos heaters are provided during winter.
5. Recreation: outings, filmshows, visits, teas and dinner parties have been arranged.
6. Bible studies: Cantonese Bible studies are held on Wednesday nights.
7. Residential care: Those in need of extra care and who cannot take care of themselves are placed in the Monaco Residential Home where they are looked after 24 hours a day. Three such senior citizens were being helped.

(CMB AGM 1979;3:1.10.1979)

5.6.3.2 Cultural inhibitions in applying for pensions

The elderly Chinese were reluctant to apply for their Old Age Pension or Disability Pension for a number of reasons. A large number of them did not have their personal documents in order and were therefore afraid of coming into conflict with the immigration officials on that score. Others again felt that it would be 'shameful' to be dependent on the State and not on their own kith and kin.

They interpreted their unfavourable circumstances as proof of

their own failure in life. The lack of family and clan support further added to their low esteem. Some of them felt that they had failed in raising filial children to care for them in their old age. Prior to their contact with the CCEC, none of them had had any connections with any Christian church.

Those who were assisted with their pension applications by the church received an inadequate amount of R54 per month, the same as their Coloured and Indian counterparts up till June 1980 (Interview Prigge: 19.12.1980).

5.6.3.3 Pensions: increased after trade agreements signed

This gross inadequacy of this pension was one of the reasons which prompted the implementation of the CCEC programme in 1976. Three months after the 1980 visit of the Chinese Premier, Mr Sun Yun-suan and the signing of the R400 million uranium agreement between the two countries, Chinese old age pensions were dramatically increased. From R93 per month, the pension payments were brought on par with those of the Whites, namely R152 per month in contrast to the Indian and Coloured pension of R93 and the R57 for Black pensioners (Correspondence Department of Social Welfare and Pensions, Durban: 19:5:1984).

5.6.3.4 Meeting the basic needs of the elderly

Transportation to and from hospitals and the need to help with interpretation and the completion of admissions forms and booking of appointments were some of the problems which faced the elderly Chinese who were neither able to speak or write English. The danger of taking the wrong dosage of medicines was also a distinct problem which was overcome with careful repacking and relabeling of pills into daily packs.

The monthly distribution of food parcels took on a meaningful involvement for the CCEC ten-person strong committee. The right

kind of food had to be purchased in bulk in order to obtain the best price, and in many instances repacked into smaller packets. The gratitude of the 25 grateful recipients more than made up for all the effort and expense involved in making up the parcels and the time consuming chore of delivering them.

The winter months saw the CCEC buy Capil heaters to be loaned out to the elderly. As these heaters were relatively safe to use and cost effective, they were much appreciated by the recipients.

Each month various social activities were arranged for the senior citizens. They were taken out on sightseeing trips in and around Johannesburg, filmshows were arranged for them, as well as teas and dinners at the church.

As indicated in the CCEC report above, a number of the elderly who could no longer care for themselves, were placed in a residential hotel where medical supervision was available around the clock. In certain cases, families assisted with the fees. The CCEC funds were sufficient however, to help other cases.

5.6.3.5 Meeting the spiritual needs of the elderly

The spiritual needs of the elderly were also taken care of. Counselling was provided by a team consisting of the minister and some of the deacons. An invitation was extended to each contact in the programme to visit the church on Sunday mornings for the simultaneously translated sermons via earphones installed on special pews. The elderly were also invited and transported to and from the Wednesday Cantonese evening Bible study group meetings.

5.6.3.6 Appreciation for 'practical' concern shown

One of the most unexpected yet effective means whereby the CCEC gained the admiration and respect of the community occurred when

a team from the church which included the leaders and young people, arrived at one of the buildings in Ferreirastown in 1976 to help clean, scrub, refurbish and repaint a number of the rooms in which some of the elderly Chinese men lived. According to reports which reached the church, many of the Chinese living in that complex marvelled and appreciated the concern which the church showed. This resulted in the church being known within the community as 'the church that cares'.

The community's appreciation of the CCEC programme was indicated in the 1979 Church AGM report on the activities of the CCEC by Mrs Brown (CMB;3:1.10.1979) who concluded with the following words:

> Our services are rendered free to anyone in need. Please contact us if you need help. Recently some of the Ford families showed their appreciation for an act of help by our team to an old lady and they took it upon themselves to collect the princely sum of R640 which was then donated to our fund.

5.6.3.7 Hong Ning Chinese Old Age Home and the CCEC

The CCEC enjoys a close association with the Hong Ning Chinese Old Age Home in Belgravia, Johannesburg. A number of the home's residents attend services at the Southdale church and the CCEC also conducts regular religious meetings at the home. Special dinners are arranged every quarter at the home and those whose birthdays fall within that quarter each receives a gift from the CCEC.

The social aspect of the CCEC programme is very important, but the programme itself is a means towards an end, that of evangelism among the elderly.

5.6.3.8 The other congregations

It seems providential that in each major congregation, a certain number of people, both young and old are able to speak Cantonese and English. It is common to find among the younger Christians the ability to speak but not to be able to read or write Chinese with any real measure of expertise. The elderly are therefore taught some Biblical doctrine and are able to participate in prayers and some hymn and chorus singing. Bilingual hymnals in English and Chinese and taped sermons in Cantonese from Hong Kong have proved most helpful in ministering to the elderly.

While the Chinese Christian Fellowship and the Chinese Assembly of God have talented bilingual Christians who are able to minister to the elderly, the Southdale Church enjoys the distinction of having a former principal of the Chinese School as an Elder and the services of others who are highly educated in Chinese, having come to South Africa as representatives and editorial staff members of the official Chinese Consular Gazette.

5.7 AN ASSESSMENT: THE JOHANNESBURG CHINESE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

5.7.1 Relationships between the Protestant groups in Johannesburg

5.7.1.1 Self-centredness

The relationship which exists between the Protestant groups in Johannesburg may be described as cordial but not close. As observed from the outside, each group or church is involved in its own affairs and its own programmes to extend its influence in the community. In theory all Christians ought to love one another (John 15:12 GNB) and seek the fulfillment of establishing Christ's kingdom on earth (Matthew 6:10 KJV). The reality is quite different.

The pressures of denominationalism and the terror of statistics to justify the existence of the group cause men and women of genuine goodwill to give undue emphasis to denominational or group interests to the detriment of the growth of Christ's kingdom amongst men. While this observation is true of the Church world-wide, it is more obvious in a relatively small community such as the Chinese Protestants in Johannesburg.

Except for a tenuous religious unity in the acceptance of certain commonly-held Protestant distinctives and a unity in Christ as Lord, the Chinese Protestants do not find it easy to co-operate with each other. This lack of unity may be associated with an unspoken but existent spirit of competitiveness.

5.7.1.2 Limited co-operation

A certain measure of co-operation does exist, especially between the Southdale Baptist Church and the Chinese Assembly of God Church. The visit of special speakers from overseas tend to bring the two congregations together for the combined meetings. The writer had the responsibility of organizing and arranging the visits of two internationally prominent Chinese Christian leaders between 1969 and 1978.

The visit of the late Pastor Stephen Wang in 1969 to South Africa (Wang 1973:154) and the visit of Rev. Thomas Wang in 1978 (Song 1978: 28-29) as the secretary of the Chinese Co-ordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE) provided splendid opportunities for the two churches to work together. The Chinese Christian Fellowship on the other hand was restrained in their support on both occasions.

5.7.1.3 Interdenominational friendships among the elderly

A difference must be drawn between formal co-operation between

the leaders and the governing bodies of the churches on the one hand and the informal open fellowship between the members and adherents of the various churches and groups on the other hand. Thus many of the senior citizen members or adherents of one congregation will frequently attend social and worship functions of other congregations. One of the main reasons for this informal inter-denominationalism among the elderly is the involvement of friends in the other congregations. Differences in denominational structures and policies do not affect the friendships which exist among the elderly in the different congregations.

5.7.1.4 Church policies: differences and similarities

The different forms of church government found in the congregations in this study are matched by the different forms of ministerial training and recognition. The Chinese Christian Fellowship does not have a formal membership nor does its informal yet not unstructured meetings require the services of an ordained minister.

The Baptists hold to a formal membership and the ordained minister is usually one who has received adequate ministerial education. Much emphasis is placed on the importance of Lay leadership in the work and the government of the church.
The Assemblies of God and the Church of Christ share most of the characteristics of the Baptists with varying degrees of differences in the matter of church polity and doctrinal emphases.

5.7.2 Programmes assessment

5.7.2.1 Social needs

Some of the social problems which faced the elderly in the Chinese community were tackled by the Southdale Baptist Church in

their Christian Care for Elderly Chinese programme. The relatively comprehensive nature of the programme, especially during the early years of its implementation elicited much appreciation from the community. The other congregations lack a similar programme.

5.7.2.2 Bible Studies

In a study of the weekly activities available to the members and adherents of each congregation, the teaching of the Bible enjoys paramount importance, whether preached on Sundays or taught at a midweek Bible study meeting. This emphasis is further shown in the existence of Sunday schools in the Southdale Baptist, the Chinese Assembly of God, the Church of Christ and the Chinese Fellowship.

The Southdale Church is the only church which conducts a Bible study especially for the elderly in their own vernacular. This opportunity also serves as the special weekly evangelistic outreach to visitors and new adherents. The static attendance at this study group bears out the relevance of the observation of one of the leading non-Christian members of the community (Interview Mr WK: 13.3.1989) who commented that Christianity had made very little progress in the community.

He also remarked that the Christian influence on the older Chinese people in the community was limited and that to his knowledge very few of the older Chinese have converted to the Christian faith. He thought that the friendliness shown to some of the elderly Chinese was an important factor which drew them to the churches. When he was asked why he thought the Chinese did not become Christians in larger numbers, he said that the Chinese people were free thinkers and that they also worked too hard and therefore had no time for church. The influence of Confucius, who was not a religious teacher, also helped to encourage the Chinese to be 'free thinkers'.

5.7.2.3 Emphasis on Prayer

Special prayer times are usually held in conjunction with the study of the Bible. These meetings are arranged by the church leadership to suit their local needs and requirements. These factors could involve the use of either English or Cantonese, the availability of a musical instrument for singing, the time of the meeting to suit either the younger or the older members of the congregation.

5.7.2.4 Transportation problems

The transportation of the elderly is a perennial problem and every meeting needs to be logistically planned with this aspect in mind. The frailty of the elderly and the inclemency of the weather are two other factors which programme organizers have to deal with on a regular basis. Sunday School children and older youth who do not own cars also need to have transport arranged for them if their parents are not involved with the churches.

5.7.2.5 Special target groups

Not all churches have departments to cater for the specific needs or ministries which are peculiar to special groups such as the women's association or the men's fellowship. The Southdale church organizes a women's associational meeting on the third Saturday of each month and a coffee morning on the first Saturday of each month for fellowship and outreach. The men are however not catered for in the same way (Interview Coskey: 11.12.1988).

The lack of a strongly motivated and ongoing youth programmes in some churches is one of their greatest weaknesses. Already the new generation of church leaders which should have come up via the ranks of the youth fellowships, is conspicuous by their

absence.

5.7.2.6 Group meets on 'different' days

The Chinese Christian Fellowship lists Tuesday as their Praise, Worship, Testimony and the Preaching of the Word day while Sunday afternoons are devoted to Bible study. On alternate Saturdays they meet for the Breaking of Bread service and Friday evenings are set aside for intercessory prayer (Interview Chong (K): 5.2.1988).

From the information supplied to the writer by the churches and the Chinese Christian Fellowship, it appears that the Chinese Johannesburg Protestants have settled into a basically self-satisfied era after their initial era of vigorous evangelism. They seem to be busy maintaining their various denominational or private orthodoxies and many of the programmes appear to be self-maintaining activities which are structured to keep the 'religious machinery' turning. Two dangers face the Johannesburg Chinese Protestant congregations: becoming immune to criticism and becoming ingrown as congregations.

5.7.2.7 A static membership growth rate

The three major congregations: Southdale Baptist, Chinese Assemblies and the Chinese Fellowship all show signs of a predominantly static membership growth-rate over the past few years.

While interest in religion has continued to draw people into the churches, many seem to leave after the initial contact with the congregations. One church leader remarked to the writer that both the front and back doors of the church are wide open. The people come into the churches but they seem to walk right out through the back door. The lack of appreciative growth in the size of the Chinese Protestant congregations over the past decade

calls for much concern in the light of the population growth.

5.7.2.8 Under-utilisation of the elderly

According to the information furnished to the writer, most of the churches do not seem to have found definite ways and means of using the elderly Christians already in their churches. Committed elderly Christians are in many ways far more effective in reaching out to their peers than younger believers who may not fully appreciate the important nuances of a mature way of life. The acceptance of a new faith such as Christianity by individuals who have been steeped in traditional ways of thinking is a process which needs to be fully appreciated.

The new believers among the elderly are particularly suited to reach out to others with their new-found faith. Their ability to witness to and to reason with their peers in the light of their common lifestyle aptly suits them as exceptionally gifted evangelists in their own rights. Such a special group of people are ignored at the church's own peril in the wider ministry of the Church.

5.7.2.9 General lack of cross-cultural outreach

The Chinese Protestant community is not involved in active cross-cultural activities with races other than the Whites, except in the case of Southdale Baptist where the membership is multiracial. The concept of reconciliation between the different races, especially between the Blacks and the Whites has not had the same urgency as in many White and Black churches in the urban areas of the country.

5.7.2.10 The challenge of the Mandarin-speaking group

What type of a future lies in store for the Chinese ethnic Protestant churches in Johannesburg? Two scenarios present

themselves: the large influx of the Mandarin-speaking Chinese in Johannesburg may result in the foreseeable future a special ministry to that linguistic group. The present Consul-General of the Republic of China to South Africa who is a committed Christian, has already commenced a regular Bible study group in his home. A number of the Mandarin-speaking Chinese now worshipping at the Southdale Baptist Church are members of the consulate and may find themselves challenged to become more involved in reaching out to almost 4 000 of their countrymen in the Johannesburg area.

Another scenario for the Chinese churches in Johannesburg is the possibility of remaining relatively small but retaining a Chinese membership. The other option would be to follow the example of Southdale Baptist and become multiracial, a step which may not find general acceptance amongst the Chinese Christians at this stage of development of the political philosophy of the country.

5.7.3 The Roman Catholic Church factor

Christianity is divisive by nature (Luke 12:53 GNB). The existence of 456 Protestants in a community with a large Catholic community of 1800-2000 (Interview Fr M Touhy: 1.6.1989) underscores this aspect of Christianity. As far as the ancestral cult is concerned, Chinese Protestants do view the cult in a very different light to the attitude adopted by the Roman Catholic Church which lifted the ban on sacrifices to Confucius and the ancestors on 8 December 1939 (Council of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance 1977:341).

The Roman Catholic church at present follows the 'sympathetic' attitude towards the ancestor cult originally associated with Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the Jesuit missionary to China.
The revised policy was issued by Pope Pius XII on 8 December 1939 and effectively cancelled the decree of Pope Clement XI Ex illa die which was promulgated on the 20 November 1704 in response to

the Rites Controversy in China (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1969;19:351).

Chinese Catholics were informed that the 'worship' of the ancestors and of Confucius are viewed as expressions of respect for the dead and that the rituals helped teach the young to respect their own culture. It was therefore right for the believers to bow or to practise other forms of rituals before a dead person, an image of a dead person, and a tablet of a dead person. This became the legal basis for the Roman Catholic position.

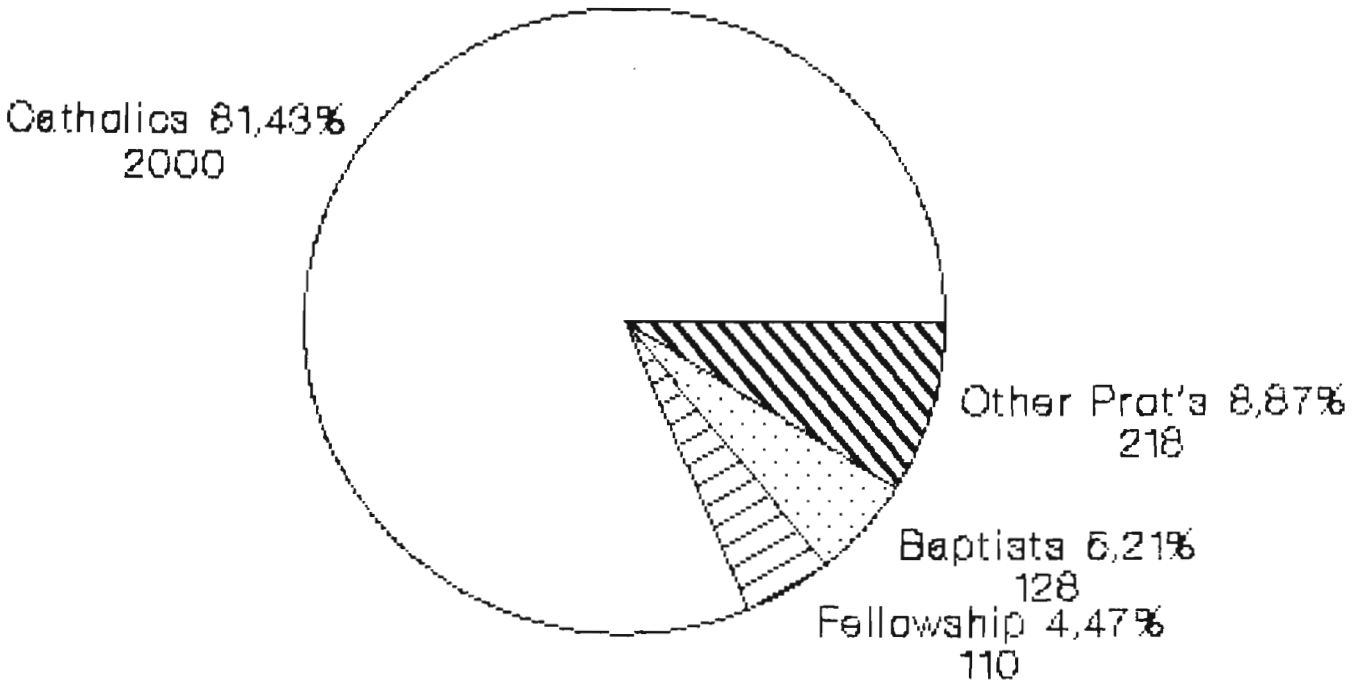
This branch of the Christian church allows the practice of ancestor worship as long as two conditions are observed: the food to be offered to the ancestors must first be blessed by the local parish priest, and the wording on the spirit tablet must be changed from **shen-wei** (the seat of god) to **hsiang-wei** (seat of incense). It has been reported that Catholic priests in Taiwan take the initiative to visit the graves during spring when the Ch'ing Ming festival is observed in order to perform Catholic ceremonies for the dead (Liao 1972:126).

It is not known to what extent the Papal decree of 8 December 1939 has had on the rate of conversion of Chinese to the Catholic Church. In Johannesburg the Catholic Church is by far the largest and the fastest growing church amongst the Chinese (vide: 185a).

The Church policy concerning ancestor worship and Chinese Catholic Church growth warrants further research.

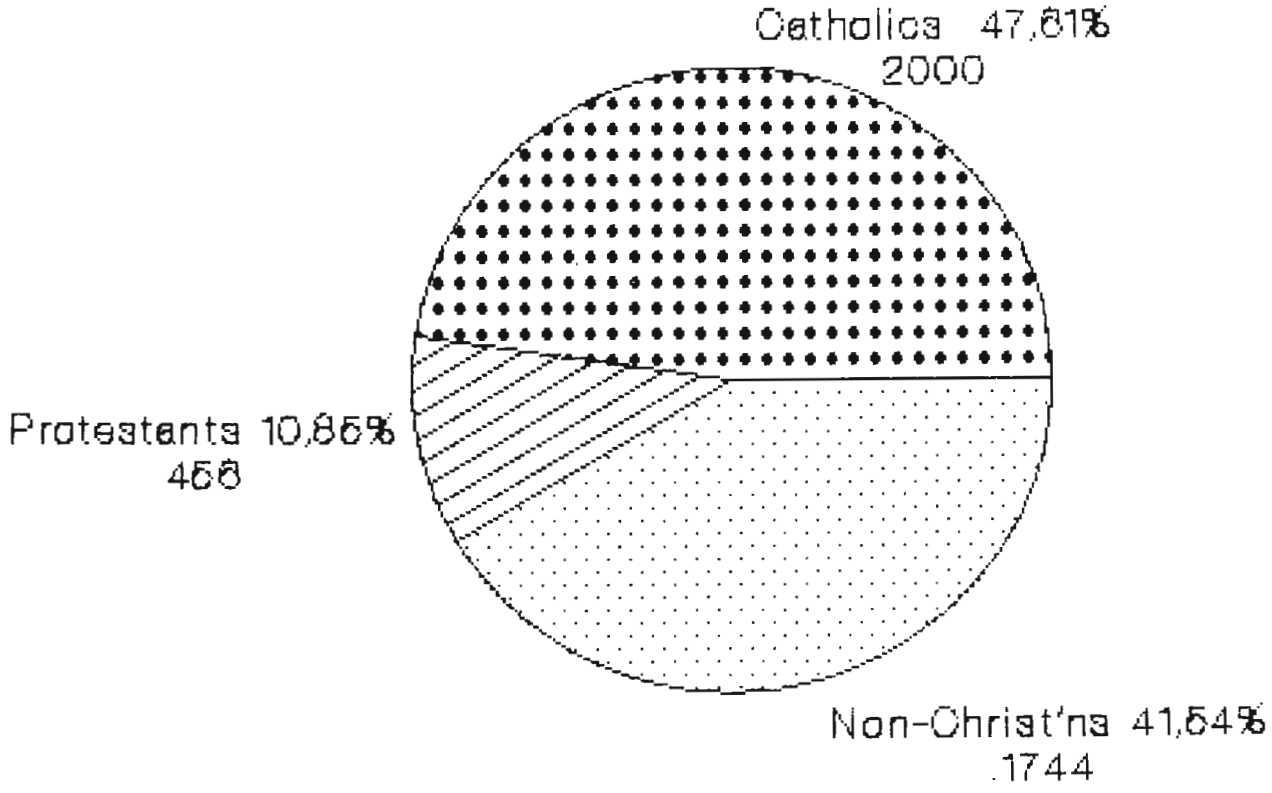
The teachings of the Protestants in the community have further widened the gap between the Christians in general and the non-Christian community as a whole. The community is now 58,47% Christian when one combines the statistics of 2 000 Roman Catholics (47,61%) and 456 Protestants (10,85%) (vide: 185b).

Jhb Chinese Christian Community
Protestants and Catholics : June 1989



Christians 2468 .

Jhb Chinese Community
Christian and non-Christian



Chinese pop. 4200 1985 census

6.0 THE STATE OF THE ANCESTOR CULT IN THE JOHANNESBURG CHINESE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

The above heading may appear at first glance to be contradictory as one does not expect Protestant practices to be confused with traditional Chinese cultic rites. The discontinuation of certain practices which the community has long considered as aspects of their cultural heritage, does require careful consideration by the Christian lest he 'throws out the baby with the bathwater'. The topic of continuity and discontinuity will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter seven.

6.1 METHODOLOGY

6.1.1 Statistics on the Johannesburg Chinese Protestants

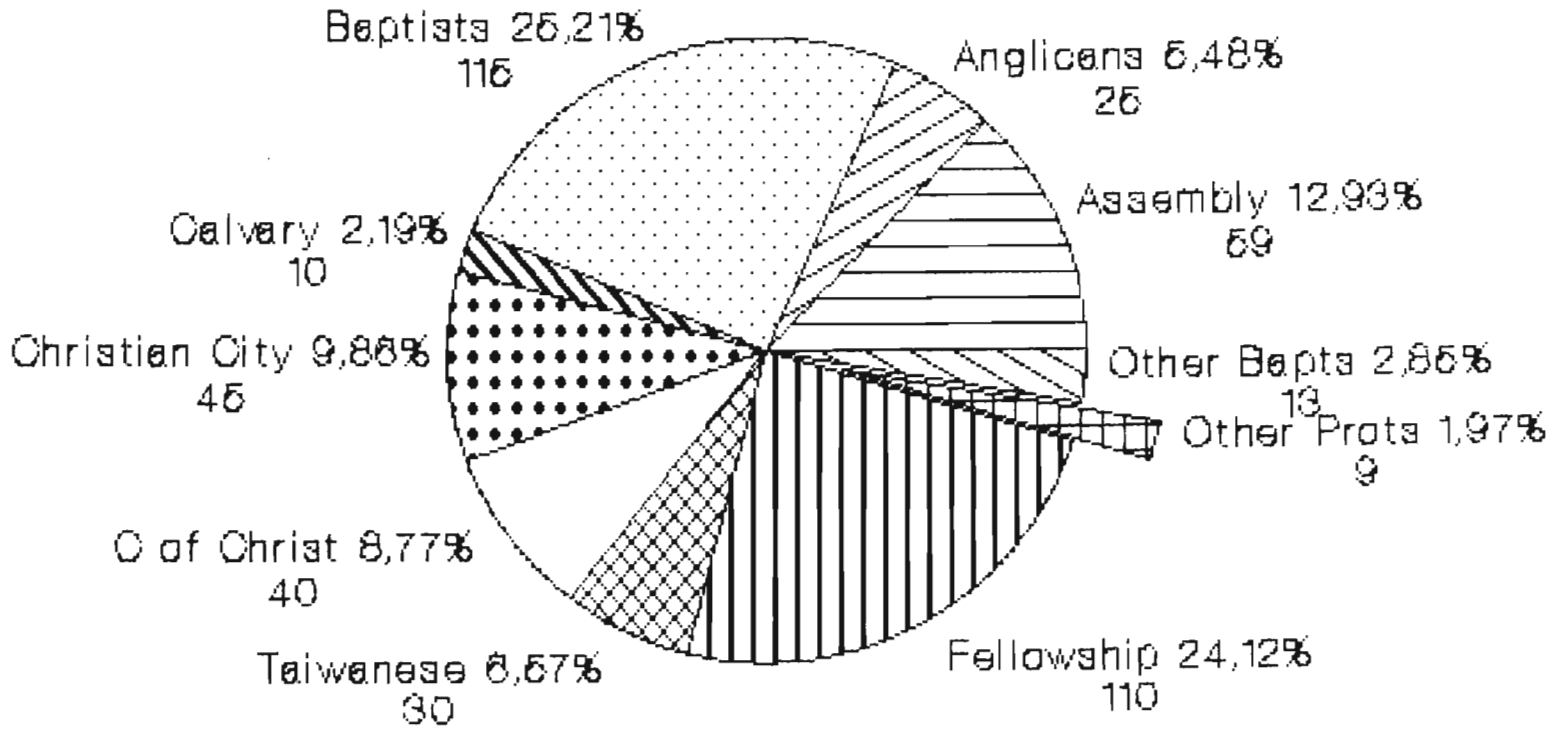
The Protestant churches and groups which operate in the Johannesburg area amongst the Chinese are respresentative of a few of the Free Church movements.

6.1.1.1 Chinese Protestant Churches and groups in Johannesburg

The list which appears below summarises the distribution of the Chinese Protestants in Johannesburg as at 30 April 1989 except in the cases of the statistics for the Chinese Christian Fellowship and Christian City. The data was obtained in telephonic interviews on 16 May 1989 and 21 June 1989, respectively. The statistics were furnished by the leaders of each congregation or group with the exception of the Anglicans. The writer had to estimate the final number as no official spokesperson could provide the writer with the number of Chinese Anglicans in Johannesburg.

The figures within the square brackets following the number of members and adherents of each denomination, indicate its percentage share in the Chinese Protestant community as at June

Jhb Chinese Protestants
June 1989



Inclusive of children: 456

1989. The designations '-18' and '+18' refer to those under eighteen and eighteen years and older respectively.

Anglicans. (approximation) Total: 25 [5,48%]
Calvary Christian Church. -18 = 2, +18 = 8. Total:10 [2,19%]
Chinese Assembly of God. -18 = 22, +18 = 37. Total:59 [12,93%].
Chinese Christian Fellowship. -18 = 60, +18 = 50. Total:110 [24,12%].
Christian City. -18 = 10, +18 = 35, Total:45 [9,86%].
Church of Christ. -18 = 10, +18 = 30. Total: 40 [8,77%].
Southdale Baptist Church. -18 = 37, +18 = 78. Total:115 [25,21%].
Other Baptist Churches. -18 = 4, +18 = 9. Total:13 [2,85%]
Other Protestants. -18 = 2, +18 = 7. Total:9 [1,97%]
Taiwanese Bible Study Group (approximation) Total: 30 [6,57%]

The above statistics represent a grand total of 456 Protestants in the Johannesburg area (vide: 186a).

Nine former Chinese members and adherents of Southdale Baptist Church have opted during the past five years to worship in Baptist churches closer to their homes in various suburbs.

The Church of Christ in Bezuidenhoutsvallei was originally a Chinese work but has changed its ethnic character to a predominantly White one. Although a book membership of thirty Chinese adults was reported, fewer than ten attend the weekly services.

A concerted attempt was made by the writer to ascertain the number of Chinese Anglicans in the Johannesburg area but the letters of enquiry to all the likely parishes in which Chinese Anglicans might worship have only resulted in fewer than ten individual Anglicans being identified by the rectors and priests.

As it has not been possible to establish the number of Chinese Anglicans in Johannesburg the writer has decided to allow a fair

approximation of twenty-five +18 adults for statistical purposes.

Ten Chinese worship at the Calvary Christian Church, which forms part of the Fill the Gap Ministry. This congregation meets in the Jack Eustice Hall in Booysens.

The Taiwanese Bible Study Group has also been allowed an approximated attendance figure of 30 in the +18 age group as most of those who attend are businessmen or consular staff members.

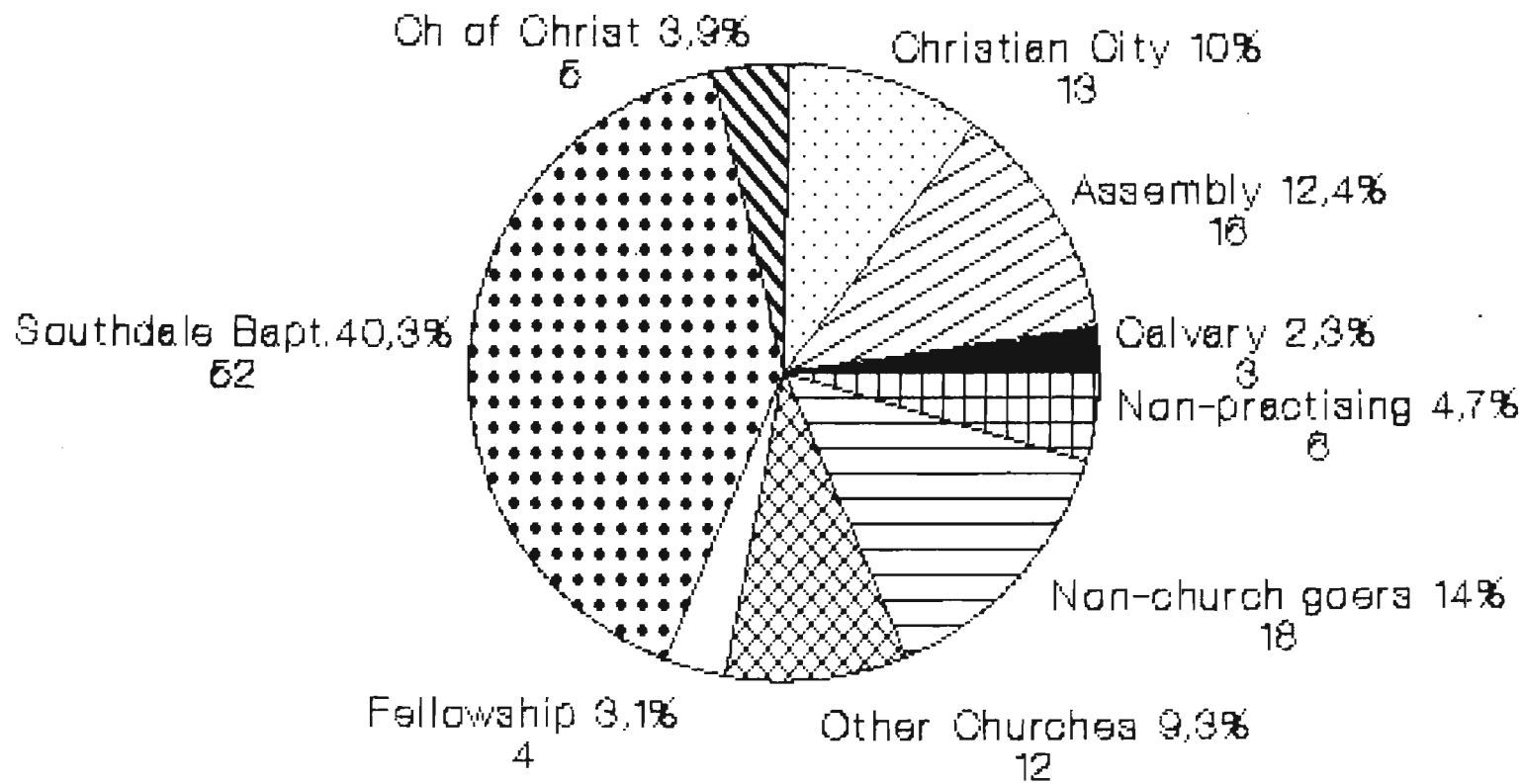
6.1.1.2 Percentage of Chinese Protestants in Johannesburg

The Chinese population in Johannesburg numbers 4200, of which 3256 are fifteen years and older (1985 census). If one uses the age bracket closer to the eighteen years of age instead, that is, of twenty years and older, a more realistic total of 2453 emerges for the purpose of comparisons. According to the information supplied by the various church leaders, the Protestant membership of adults (eighteen years and older) in the Johannesburg area is 309. If the figure of 2453 is used to calculate the percentage of adult Chinese who are Protestant, then 12,59% of the Johannesburg adult Chinese population consider themselves Protestants.

The inclusion of adherents in Sunday Schools and youth work will account for an additional 147 persons. This figure alters the percentage of Chinese Protestants in the total Johannesburg community of 4200 to 10,85%.

The questionnaires were handed out and administered in the various congregations during March and April 1989 either by the writer himself or by some responsible member or members of the congregations. In the case of the Chinese Christian Fellowship, a few questionnaires were administered by the writer personally. Unfortunately ten questionnaires which were to be completed by one of the leaders on behalf of the writer did not reach the

Major Questionnaire
Participants



10 Fellowship responses late

writer in time for inclusion in this study.

6.1.1.3 Level of participation in the major questionnaire

A total of 129 major questionnaires were administered.
The following list indicates the level of participation in the survey questionnaire by each church or group.

Calvary Christian Church (3 questionnaires: 2,32%)
Chinese Assembly of God (16 questionnaires: 12,40%)
Chinese Christian Fellowship (4 questionnaires: 3,10%)
Christian City (13 questionnaires:10,07%)
Church of Christ (5 questionnaires: 3,87%)
Southdale Baptist Church (52 questionnaires: 40,31%)
Other Churches (12 questionnaires: 9,30%)
Non-church goers (18 questionnaires: 13,95%)
Not practising Christians (6 questionnaires: 4,65%)

Although the majority of those who completed the questionnaire were associated with one of the Protestant churches or fellowships, a significant number of 'non-church going' Chinese (13,95%) participated in the survey. Six respondents (4,65%) did not consider themselves as 'practising Christians' but still thought of themselves as 'Protestants' (vide: 188a).

Neither the Anglicans nor the members of the Taiwanese Bible Study Group were approached to complete the questionnaires. In the case of the former, the researcher was not able to trace them in the time available for the administering of all the questionnaires. In the case of the latter, the researcher only learnt about the group's existence after the questionnaire data had already been captured and analysed on computer.

6.1.2 The Youth questionnaire

In order to obtain additional insights into the varying responses

to the ancestor cult amongst the Johannesburg Chinese youth who were not necessarily Protestants, a questionnaire containing two questions was administered (Appendix C). A random sample of one hundred of mainly unmarried young people was used. The universe of young people under twenty is 1747 or 41,59% (1985 census). The questionnaire was therefore administered to 5,72% of this target group.

Part of the strategy for polling the young people was to discover how many of them were aware of the type of cultic activity which occurred in their homes. The information gained in this random survey indicated that joss sticks were lit in as many as 19% of homes on 'special occasions,' 13% every day and 5% 'occasionally'.
The offering of food on 'special occasions' registered a much higher participation level of 32% with a small response of 4% for food offered 'occasionally'.

One of the significant conclusions reached as a result of these findings is the fact that even in homes with a relatively young set of parents, probably in their mid-forties to mid-fifties, aspects of the ancestral cult continue to be practised.

6.1.3 The Major questionnaire

One other questionnaire, hereafter referred to as the 'Major questionnaire', was also administered (Appendix B). The qualifying conditions for completing the questionnaire were clearly stated on its first page. Those eligible included all Chinese who were 18 years and older, and who considered themselves to be Protestants, regardless of whether they were members or adherents of any church or whether they were directly or indirectly associated with any Protestant church or fellowship in the Johannesburg area.

The major questionnaire was more detailed in order to obtain the

following information about the respondent: biographical details (QQ 1-9), attendance at two annual traditional funerary events (QQ 9-13), an assessment of the individual's spiritual status and his awareness of the teachings of his church on certain issues (QQ 14-26); details of the respondent's cultic background (QQ 27-30), the respondent's present attitude to the ancestor cult (QQ 31-33). The latter part of the questionnaire dealt with the responses to statements, situations and practices (QQ 34-46), the respondent's categorization of certain rites and statements (QQ 47-50) and three concluding questions on the ancestor cult and culture (QQ 48-52).

6.1.4 In-depth interviews

Apart from the administration of the questionnaires, in-depth interviews were also conducted with certain of the Chinese Protestant leaders, some non-Protestant church goers and a few non-Christians to obtain additional information and insights relevant to the topic. References to these two sources will therefore be a common feature of this and the final chapter.

The term 'Record' or 'Records' in this and the seventh chapters will refer to the major questionnaire respondent's number (e g Records 27, 28). Similarly, 'Q' and 'QQ' in this and the last chapters will refer to a question or questions respectively, in the major questionnaire (e g Q15, QQ17,19)

6.1.5 Use of the terms 'veneration' and 'worship'

The terms 'ancestor veneration' and 'ancestor worship' are used in accordance with the parameters outlined in chapter 1.1.3. They are therefore not interchangeably used either in the questionnaire or in the analysis of the data below.

6.1.6 Chapter content

This chapter consists of six sections, each dealing with a specific body of information principally obtained from the major questionnaire and from interviews. The section dealing with the origin and characteristics of Protestantism (Ch 6.2) is the exception.
The first section will consist of a brief outline of Protestantism.

6.2 A BRIEF OUTLINE OF PROTESTANTISM

The study commenced with a brief description of the ancestor cult in the introductory chapter to set the backdrop to the more detailed treatment which was accorded the subject. In order to maintain the traditional Chinese sense of balance, the writer thought it necessary to supply a brief description of the Protestant Christianity in this section of the penultimate chapter. This was also done to make the examination of culturo-religious continuity and discontinuity amongst the Chinese Protestants easier to follow.

6.2.1 The origin of Protestantism

The origin of the 'Protestant' church movement is traced by students of European history to the sixteenth century. The two terms, 'Protestant' and 'Reformation', are inextricably weaved together in history. The Protestant churches were established after a series of conflicts concerning faith and conduct arose between ecclesiastical reformers and the dominant Roman Catholic Church. Although Luther is credited with the instigation of the Reformation in 1517 when he nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of the castle church of Wittenburg, he had in fact, been preceded by others such as the Lollards under John Wycliffe and the Hussites with John Huss as their leader.

The Reformation swept throughout Europe: Switzerland under Zwingli in 1520, and Calvin whose erudite mind and active quill combined to spearhead the Reformation in many parts of Europe, including England and Scotland and subsequently in North America.

The name 'Protestant' is derived from the Latin word 'protestatio' meaning, 'protestations' of a minority group at the Diet of Speyer in 1529 (ME 1981:995).

6.2.2 Characteristics of Protestantism

Although the matters which the Protestants raised, covered a wide field, the most important theological aspects included the following topics: the centrality of Christ in worship and devotion in contrast to the veneration of, and the mediation by the saints and Mary, and the acceptance of the Eucharist and Baptism only as the sacraments. This was done in conjunction with the rejection of the Catholic mass in which Christ is re-sacrificed each time it is celebrated. Of special importance to Protestant national leaders was their refusal to acknowledge the Pope's political and ecclesiastical jurisdiction over them, and the concommitant rejection of the Catholic form of church government in favour of other systems.

Perhaps the single most important point of protestation which allowed the Reformation tide to gain such momentum was the Protestant insistence on the sole use of Scripture to determine guidelines for faith and conduct, as against the Roman Catholic appeal to Scripture and tradition. The correlate to this principle of Sola Scriptura was the right of every Christian to read the Bible and to interpret it according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Chinese Protestant community shares in the heritage of these theological convictions. Some of the questionnaire answers have shown a decidedly independent streak in accordance with the

latter principle on scripture and its interpretation.

6.3 THE NATURE OF THE ANCESTOR CULT IN JOHANNESBURG

The Johannesburg Chinese do not associate the ancestor cult with the practice of filial piety but consider it as a traditional aspect of Chinese culture associated with the dead. To appreciate how the Johannesburg Chinese view the nature of the cult, it is very important to realize that the measure of religion associated with it depends on the involvement of the individual with the cult. One cannot therefore describe all the Chinese who participate in a cult festival or a dinner by being present, as ancestor worshippers or ancestor venerators.

6.3.1 Confusion of terms and erroneous deductions

The confusion which many Johannesburg Chinese people experience when speaking about the worship or veneration of ancestors and the god-shelf may be traced to a number of factors such as the use of overlapping terms and definitions as well as erroneous deductions based on mistaken interpretations.

6.3.1.1 Confusion of terms

For example, **paai joe scene** (to pay respects to the ancestors) is a common Cantonese term used in Johannesburg. The verb 'paai' is also used by some in the term paai **sun** (god, deity, spirit or soul), either in the singular or plural form. The Chinese language does not distinguish between singular or plural nouns; their numbers are indicated by the addition of the appropriate numeral.

In its plural form, the noun 'sun' refers to a conglomeration of good and evil supernatural beings including the ethereal persona of the deceased. With such an inclusive definition of 'sun' it is no wonder that its use leads to confusion when the subject of the

worship of ancestors is discussed.

It is therefore not possible to know whether a person venerates, respects or worships an ancestor from an examination of the use of the word paai. The basic meaning for paai is to show 'obeisance' which in turn has been defined as a gesture, especially by bowing or curtsying, thereby expressing submission, respect or salutation (RDGED :1962).

Some Johannesburg Chinese also erroneously use the terms 'paai sun' and **keng sun** (making an offering or sacrifice to the deities) interchangeably. The term 'to make a sacrifice' in Cantonese is 'keng' in Hakka it is 'keen'. In Hakka the phrase, 'keen tze kung' is clearly distinguished from the phrase 'paai tze kung' (ch 1.2.3.3).

6.3.1.2 Wrong deductions

A wrong deduction can result from a misinterpretation of the siting of worship articles. This fact was clearly illustrated in the replies which were given to Q34A which stated, 'A "god-shelf" in a home indicates the practice of 'ancestor worship''. Almost all the respondents answered this question (98%). Sixty four percent agreed with the statement and those who were uncertain registered 9%. However, twenty five percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This disagreement was not necessarily based on the possibility of confusing the worship of the ancestors with the deities. It may have been an attempt to thwart the idea that families were involved in 'ancestor worship' simply because of the presence of 'a god-shelf', which to many Johannesburg Chinese is synonymous with the ancestor shelf.

It is a common practice in many Johannesburg homes to have the ancestor's spirit tablet situated on the same piece of furniture such as a server, a low storage cupboard or a shelf, with a

picture of one or more of the deities favoured by the family. The association of the two classes of 'spirit' beings in such close proximity may also be one of the reasons why some people confuse the worshipping of the deities with the showing of respect or venerating of the ancestors.

One practitioner of the veneration of the ancestors Mr KC, (Interview: 18.3.1989) informed the writer that a basic altar should have the deities placed in the centre of the shelf or suitable surface, and the ancestor spirit tablet, photograph or name scroll positioned to the left of the deities. Mr KC further described the ideal additional components of an altar. At a lower level, usually on the floor, but in front of the 'god-shelf' a shrine to the Earth God known in Cantonese as **Toe Tay Kong** should be installed. This is in addition to the **Moon Sun** (the door gods) which guard the front door of the house. Outside of the house some Chinese also worship the Sky God whose shrine is represented on a piece of red paper with the name 'Teen Sun' written on it. No picture or any other representation of this deity is allowed or required.

None of the respondents to the questionnaire were as committed to the ancestors as Mr KC, but many of them indicated that they attended certain of the rites or festivals associated with the ancestors. It is now necessary to consider the extent to which the respondents supported the cult.

6.3.2 Differences in levels of support of the cult

Five questions in the questionnaire were used to elicit the level of support given by the Johannesburg Chinese Protestants for certain ancestral rites (QQ 9-11). The questions were framed with the deliberate use of the word 'participate' instead of 'attend', 'practice' or 'observe' for the following reasons. A person may attend a function but not participate in it even as a person may attend a rite as an observer, and be either

unsympathetic or sympathetic to its practice. The word 'practice' was thought to contain a measure of commitment to the cult whereas the word 'participate' could imply occasional attendance without extensive involvement.

6.3.2.1 Some low percentage responses

An effective 42% and 38% of the respondents participated in the Hung Cheng Jeat and Seu Yea respectively (6.4.3.1; 6.4.3.2). Their participation should be seen in the light of their responses to QQ 24 and Q42 C,D. When the respondents were asked whether a Christian must reject ancestor worship (Q24) only 49% answered. Five percent said that they did not know, while 7% indicated that they were uncertain. Thirteen percent said 'no' and only 24% indicated an affirmative answer. The low percentage reply to this question can be interpreted as the result of a possible conflict between culture and Christianity. The possibility also exists that the respondents simply did not bother to think through the implications of the question.

In Q 42C, D the respondents were asked to indicate how they felt about the two statements which reflected the same sentiments. 'Ancestors exercise good and bad influences on their offsprings' and 'The spirits of ancestors have no influence over their offsprings'. The first statement drew a response of 45% 'strongly disagree', 35% 'disagree', 7% 'uncertain', 1,5% 'agree' and 2.3% 'strongly agree'. Those who disagreed with the statement numbered 80%. It is however possible that some of the respondents may have misinterpreted the period involved as to when the ancestors influence their offsprings. Thus the statement in Q42C should have been more explicit in its wording. The ancestors do continue to influence their offsprings in a non-religious or ritualistic way when people are guided by parental teachings given while the parents were alive.

6.3.2.2 The influence of ancestors

There was a 90% response to the second statement by those who classified themselves as 'Christians' according to Q15. Of these, 64% agreed that the spirits of the ancestors have no influence over their offsprings while almost 4% disagreed with the statement. A fairly high 8,5% of the Christians indicated that they were 'uncertain'. The latter two figures added together already constitute 12,5% committed Chinese Christian Protestants who took a contrary stand to the statement.

The 64% response in support of the statement that ancestors have no influence over their offsprings coupled with the 8,5% of uncertainty on the part of committed Christians, indicate that although Chinese Christians are increasing in numbers, a significant percentage of them are not yet fully convinced that they should reject the cult of the ancestors.

6.3.2.3 Cultural importance of the ancestor cult

The reticence to reject outright an aspect of their cultural heritage may be further gauged from the assessment of 98% of the respondents to the question, 'How would you rate the cult of the ancestors in terms of Chinese culture?' Sixteen percent said that they were uncertain, and another 16% thought the cult to be 'not important' in terms of Chinese culture. However 72% thought it to be either very important (32%) or important (40%) to their culture.

In a further probe to test the sensitivity of the Johannesburg Chinese to the role of the ancestral rites and whether the rites constituted an ethno-cultural link with China, the overwhelming positive response registered 82% while only 7% returned a 'no' response. Those who were uncertain numbered 11% and those who stated that they did not know constituted 14% of the 95% respondents who completed this question.

6.3.2.4 Reasons for participation in cultic activities

Forty two percent of Chinese Protestants in Johannesburg participate in Hung Cheng and the reasons they gave ranged from respect (24%), tradition (20%), and clan loyalty (17%). A similar pattern emerged when reasons were given for their participation in the Seu Yea activities. They participated for reasons of respect (21%), tradition (16%), and clan loyalty (12%).

The above statistics indicate that a significant number of Chinese Protestant Christians participate in certain rites of the cult of the ancestors for various reasons, a number of which are associated with their traditional cultural values. The measure of support for certain aspects of the ancestral cult does not mean that a resurgence of the cult is occurring nor does it necessarily mean that the Chinese Protestant Christians are deliberately participating in the rites because of their cultural worth. The evidences from the questionnaire indicate that the process of continuity and discontinuity of culture and religion is occurring within this church community.

6.4 THE PREVALENCE OF THE CULT IN THE JOHANNESBURG CHINESE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

6.4.1 The cultic background of the Johannesburg Chinese Protestants

Traditional ancestor beliefs and practices played an important role in the homes of many of the respondents. Of the replies received from the 129 respondents in the major questionnaire, it was calculated that 39% were raised in homes in which a special place was set aside for the worship or veneration of the ancestors. This figure however, includes the 25.5% of the older group in the fifty-one years and older age bracket.

Eighteen (14%) of this age group fell into the sixty-one plus bracket. As the place of birth was not included in the questionnaire, it is not possible to state with certainty whether the majority of the respondents were raised in a traditional cultic-orientated home in China. It is very likely that at least some of the respondents came to South Africa from China during the mid 1920s - 1930s.

Only one respondent was uncertain whether his paternal home had a special place set aside for the veneration or worship of ancestors.

When asked whether they were taught how to participate in the rites of ancestor 'worship' fewer than half of the respondents replied in the affirmative (42%). More than half (53%) of the respondents returned a negative answer. Three respondents were uncertain as to whether they were taught or not and two replied that they 'did not know'.

An interesting pattern was discernable when the replies to the next question were analysed. 'Who was your MAIN teacher of these rites?' Thirty (23%) replied that their parents were their main teachers and eighteen (14%) said that they had been taught by their grandparents. One person noted that an uncle was the main teacher and two others indicated that an aunt was responsible for their cultic education. One respondent reported that a friend served as a teacher while four respondents replied 'other'.

An attempt was made to discover at what age the respondents first learnt about the rites. More than half (53%) of the respondents indicated that they did not learn about the rites while 30% could not remember how old they were when they first learnt the rites. Fortunately one fifth of the respondents were able to give either an approximation or the exact age when they first learnt the rites. These ages ranged from a youthful four year old to a

mature respondent who first learnt about the ancestor cult at the age of twenty-seven.

The age-of-learning curve involved sixteen pre-teens (4-12); four teenagers (13-19) and six adults (20-27). Pre-teens do not usually have much choice in such matters as they are expected to be obedient to their elders but teenagers tend to be less interested in religious matters and also somewhat more likely to reject the values of their elders. The older respondents indicated either an awakening or a re-awakening of interest in aspects of Chinese culture, including the practice of the ancestor cult.

The above background data indicate that almost four out of every ten respondents were nurtured in the cultic practices of the ancestors. How has the Protestant form of Christianity affected this particular group?

6.4.2 Indications of Protestant support for traditional cultic practices

Mention was made above that the 25% response from members of the Chinese community who are fifty-one years and older may have unduly affected the incidence of Protestants who were brought up in traditional homes. The statistics for this age group reveal a marked departure from the traditional observance of the ancestor cult.

6.4.2.1 Older Protestant respondents

Of the fifteen respondents in the 51-60 age bracket, only two have maintained an ancestor worship or veneration centre. None of the eighteen individuals in the 61-plus age category has maintained such a centre of worship. This significant 94% of the older Protestant respondents completely rejected the practice of the ancestor cult in their homes. This percentage compares with

the percentage replies received concerning the practice of the ancestral worship rites of Q32.

How often do the Johannesburg Chinese Protestants practise the ancestral worship rites?

Four respondents in the 51-60 years bracket identified themselves as practising the ancestral worship rites: the two who practised these rites 'sometimes', did so only at the homes of their in-laws. They themselves did not maintain a centre of ancestor worship at home (Records 13,89). The other two respondents practised the rites both at home, where they maintain a worship centre, and at their in-laws' home (Records 34,75). The latter two noted that they 'regularly' practised the rites.
The remaining eleven respondents in this age group indicated that they 'never' practised the ancestral worship rites.

In the sixty-one years and older age group, only two respondents said that they 'seldom' practised the rites (Records 27,30). The remaining sixteen respondents in this age group all indicated that they 'never' practised the rites. When the two groups are taken together, one finds that an effective 82% of those who are fifty-one and older do not practise the ancestral rites.

These statistics indicate that the older Chinese converts to the Christian faith appear to be extremely faithful to the teachings of their churches and almost completely reject any association with the traditional ancestral rites.

6.4.2.2 Younger Protestant respondents

Having examined the response of the older Chinese Protestants to the traditional rites of the ancestors, we now turn our attention to looking at how have the younger Chinese Protestants responded to the problems surrounding the ancestral cultic practices in terms of their Christian perspectives.

A total of twenty-four individuals in the 41-50 age group answered Q31: 'Do you maintain a special place in your home for the veneration or worship of ancestors?'
Only three recorded an affirmative answer while twenty-one returned a negative response. When asked how often they practised the ancestral worship rites, twenty-two stated 'never' and one indicated 'sometimes'. One other indicated that the ancestral rites were regularly observed.

A further check on the participatory role in the ancestral rites was built into Q33 in which the respondent was asked in which home or homes these rites were practised.
Only one person indicated that he practised these rites in his parents' home. One other person said that he practised the ancestral rites in his in-laws' home. The other twenty-two respondents again indicated that they did not participate in such rites. This age group of 41-50 therefore returned an overall 92% 'non-practice' answer of the ancestral rites either at home or elsewhere.

Those in the age bracket of 31-40 who answered the question on whether they maintained a veneration or worship centre in their homes for ancestors responded in the following pattern. Of the thirty-four respondents in this age group, only three said that they maintained a worship centre at home while thirty-one others indicated a negative answer. This means that approximately 9% of these respondents maintained an ancestral 'veneration or worship' centre at home. As to their frequency in the practice of the ancestral rites, 85% replied that they 'never' practised the 'worship rites'. One person said that he practised the rites 'sometimes' and three respondents replied 'regularly'.

When answering the question which sought to establish where the respondents observed the ancestral rites, five indicated that they practised the rites at their grand-parents' home, two at

their in-laws' home and one at their parents' home. However thirty (88%) indicated that they did not participate in the rites. Although 91% of the thirty-four respondents said that they did not maintain an ancestor worship centre in their own homes, only 88% in actual fact did not practise the rites.

The penultimate group which completed the questionnaire fell into the 21-30 years bracket. Of the twenty-five respondents, seven (28%) indicated that a worship centre was maintained in their home while eighteen answered in the negative.

The question of frequency of participation in the rites elicited the following answers: eighteen 'never' (72%), one each for 'seldom' and 'sometimes' and five 'regularly' (20%).
The question on venues where the respondents may have practised the rites, produced the following statistics:
The rites were practised in the parental home by three respondents, two also practised the rites at their in-laws' place, two at their grand-parents' home and eighteen (72%) indicated that they did not participate in the rites.

This particular set of statistics includes the case of two students who are studying and working in Johannesburg but whose parental home is in Magaliesburg. They spend much time with their grandparents who have a home on the West Rand, from where the young people commute to their places of study and employment. Their grandparents saw to it that they were brought up in a more traditional Chinese way, which included the observance of the ancestral rites.

The youngest group of thirteen respondents ranged in age from eighteen to twenty. Only in one home was a centre for ancestral rites recorded. All the remaining twelve (92%) questionnaires registered a negative response.

A very high percentage of 85% was returned by this group as

'never' practising the ancestral rites. One respondent said that he 'seldom' practised the rites while another said that he practised the rites 'regularly'. As to where these young people practised these rites, one returned the answer 'in parents' home' while another answered 'grand-parents' home'. The other eleven (85%) respondents returned a 'do not participate' answer.

The indications of support for and rejection of the cultic rites by Chinese Protestants provide a useful statistical backdrop to the material which follows.

6.4.3 Attendance at the two major cultic festivals

6.4.3.1 The 'Spring' Festival or Ch'ing Ming - Sweeping of the Graves

Two major cultic festivals are annually observed in Johannesburg. The first calendrical festival is called 'Ch'ing Ming' which means 'clear, bright'. It is the festival of spring observed in the Northern hemisphere which coincides with the Southern hemisphere's commencement of autumn. Because of the use of the lunar calendar, the Chinese festival of spring occurs at times during the latter half of March or the first half of April. In China, the festival was linked with the proverbial 'spring cleaning' of the home after the passing of the winter months. By extension the special cleaning of the home of the deceased was also to be undertaken as a seasonal task. The common descriptive appellation assigned to this festival is 'the Sweeping of the Graves', a task which included the tidying of the grave, its repainting as well as the repainting of the writing on it.

Traditionally, the tasks were undertaken by the individual families, each tending the graves of its own deceased. The sense of community was experienced in the mingling of many families from each clan village as they made their way to the hills where the graves were invariably sited. The meeting of friends and

relatives and the subsequent conviviality which ensued always added positive elements to the communal atmosphere.

The siting of the graves in Johannesburg falls under the jurisdiction of the City Council and the graves are minimally tended in the large cemeteries which are maintained by the municipal services. The type of tasks associated with the graves in China do not therefore apply in Johannesburg.

Flowers are regularly placed on the graves by relatives, many of whom visit the graves on a weekly basis. The only difference between the weekly visits and the annual observance of the spring festival is the communal aspect. Among the Cantonese, the larger clans arrange their own visits to the cemeteries after which they all congregate at a restaurant for an evening meal.

The much smaller Hakka community disregards the clan differences and all visit the graves together, after which they enjoy a communal meal at a restaurant in the evening.

The local Chinese community adapted the spring festival to be a community affair instead of a family affair. This adaptation occurred very early in the history of the Chinese in Johannesburg due to the smallness of the community and the likelihood that certain graves might be neglected if not visited at least by the local clan members.

Over a third (37%) of the respondents participate in the annual observance Hung Cheng. A much smaller group of almost 5% participate in the communal visit to the graves 'when possible'. Taken together, these two figures present a formidable 42% of the respondents who do participate in the observance of Hung Cheng.

Different reasons were suggested for participating in Hung Cheng. Only five persons opted for the reason, 'to join in the ancestor rites' and ten others, representing almost 8% of the respondents,

suggested 'other' reasons.

The majority of the respondents (38%) who attended the Hung Cheng did so with clan members. It is usual for the wife to associate herself with her husband's clan when Hung Cheng is observed but the researcher is aware of at least one family in which the husband associates himself with the wife's clan on the occasion of the two cultic festivals.

The Lau, Quan and Cheong clans have been 'blood brothers' since their forebears swore an allegiance during the Warring States period (403-221 BC). To this day, even in Johannesburg, the three clans have continued to observe this bond and always act in unison even in matters such as the arrangements for the Hung Cheng.

6.4.3.2 Seu Yea - The Burning of Clothes

The festival known as Seu Yea is the other important cultic occasion when the clans in traditional China used to meet together. This pre-winter festival is usually celebrated in the Northern hemisphere sometime between mid-August and mid-September, again depending on the Chinese lunar calendar. The purpose of the festival is clearly described in its Chinese name, which means, 'the burning of clothes'. This is a reference to the Chinese cultic practice of burning clothes made of paper and transferring these to the netherworld where the deceased receive the gifts of warm clothes for the ensuing cold winter months. The traditional rituals also require the offering of special foods to the ancestors.

Food is also set out for the uncared-for spirits who cause trouble to those living in the vicinity where they tend to haunt and 'wander about'. As these spirits are capable of harming relatives and strangers, communities contribute to the provision of food to feed such spirits once a year.

In Johannesburg, the Seu Yea festival is observed in much the same manner as for Ch'ing Ming. The graves are visited and flowers placed on all the graves of relatives. A communal meal is also usually eaten in the evening.

It is of some significance that almost a third (32%) of all the Protestants surveyed indicated that they participated in the annual Seu Yea visits to the graves. Eight respondents (6%) indicated that they participated in the rites 'when possible'. These two categories in actual fact comprised a significant 38% of the respondents who participate in the Seu Yea festival. This participation was marginally lower than that for Hung Cheng (42%).

The reasons chosen for attending the Seu Yea cemetery visits varied, but not all that much from those given for Hung Cheng. A mere 4% of the respondents who attended the Seu Yea said that they participated in order to join in the ancestor rites.

The attendance by Chinese Protestants at the two cultic festivals averaged slightly over a third of all the respondents. The prevalence of the cult is also evident in the continued observance of the 'Inviting home of the soul ceremony' among the Chinese in Johannesburg.

6.4.4 The observance of the 'Inviting home of the soul ceremony'

The practice of the Inviting home of the soul ceremony appears to be far more common than the researcher initially expected. Mention has previously been made of the ceremony and a fairly full account of one such occasion appears as Appendix A. The questionnaire also sought to discover to what extent this ceremony was known to the general Chinese Protestant public.

Nineteen (15%) of the respondents not only knew about this ceremony but they could account for at least nineteen instances or more of the ceremony having been arranged by various community members.

The breakdown of the nineteen respondents' age-groups indicates that it was a ceremony not only known to the older groups as was first expected, but even those in the 18-20 age bracket knew about it. In actual fact, six of the nineteen instances were recorded by those in the 31-40 age bracket, one by a respondent in the 18-20 age range and three each by those in the following age brackets: 21-30, 41-50, 51-60, 61 +.

The Inviting home of the soul ceremony may therefore be said to be familiar to all age groups of the Chinese Protestant community in this representative sample.

6.4.5 The safekeeping of ancestor tablets in overseas temples

The ancestor tablet has been previously described in chapter 4.4.1.

Although it was uncommon for Chinese immigrants to have brought their ancestral tablets with them to South Africa, (Interview Mr WK: 13.3.1989) evidence from other interviews as well as data obtained in the questionnaire seemed to indicate that not only were ancestor tablets used and somehow disposed of but they were also sent out of the country for safekeeping. It appears that some families still use the wooden tablets in Johannesburg, notwithstanding the popular use of photographs of the deceased in many homes or the relatively simple framed versions of handwritten ancestor scrolls or plaques as they are sometimes called.

In an interview (16.3.1989) Mr YF told of his late grandfather who served as the caretaker of a Chinese community hall during the decade 1930-1940. One of his duties was to take care of the

ancestor altar which was situated in the hall. When asked what had happened to the tablets, Mr YF said he did not know but he surmised that his grandfather's successors or some other people most probably 'burnt' the wooden tablets. The hall has since been demolished and new buildings have been erected in its place. If the wooden tablets were burnt, it would have been in keeping with the usual Chinese method of consigning objects to the netherworld by immolatory means.

Mr TL was born in China and is in his mid-thirties. He indicated in his interview (26.3.1989) that he was very traditional in his beliefs concerning the ancestors. Because wooden spirit tablets were not readily obtainable in South Africa, he made one himself and inscribed it with the appropriate words to install it for use at home. The traditional wording on a clan ancestral spirit tablet contains three rows of inscriptions. The first character in the centre row is the name of the clan (the surname). This row of characters may be loosely translated as 'The exalted (name of clan) family, ancestors of the earliest generation'. The row to the right is read as 'The ancestors have already established their good roots'. The row on the extreme left symmetrically balances the line of characters on the right. The left row reads, 'The offsprings till the prosperous soil'.

He concurred with the writer that the photographs have replaced the spirit tablets primarily because South African Chinese do not know how to write Chinese and also because spirit tablets are not readily available. He pointed out that he used the electrical 'candle' and because ancestors cannot 'eat' electricity, he concluded that in his case, although he offers food and joss sticks to his ancestors, it is not worship but rather the show of respect. He also associated himself with the view held by the younger generation that the soul of the ancestors do not indwell the spirit tablet.

Another interviewee who was born in China (Interview Mr KC:

18.3.1989) stated that the use of the wooden tablets must be very rare in Johannesburg. Although he practises the cult, he has never seen a wooden ancestor tablet in Johannesburg since his arrival in 1962.

The questionnaire yielded some useful information concerning the fate of some of the tablets. The final two questions of the questionnaire (QQ 51,52) dealt with this particular aspect of the ancestor cult. As no Chinese temples exist in South Africa, respondents were asked how many families known to them had sent their ancestor tablets for safekeeping to an overseas temple.

The information gleaned from the replies indicated that six respondents knew of such families and that seven ancestor tablets had been sent overseas: three to Hong Kong and four to Mainland China for safekeeping.

The purpose of installing the tablets in the temples, usually Buddhist, was to facilitate the provision of 'worship' of such ancestors. A few known cases were also mentioned by King (1974:100) of families who travelled to Hong Kong to have the ancestral tablets of deceased relatives installed at one of the Buddhist Temples.

It was also interesting to note that the information concerning the safe-keeping of the tablets overseas came from respondents in the following age-groups:
Four in the 31-40 age group, one in the 41-50 age group and one in the 51-60 age group.
It appears that the respondents in the 31-40 age group are relatively better informed about these religious matters than most of the other respondents, as was also seen in their awareness of the Inviting home of the soul ceremony in 6.4.4 above.

One of the questions (Q46) in the survey contained the suggestion

that a person might visit the cemetery in order to inform one's ancestors of the intention of going on a long journey. This is a typical traditional Chinese practice and it was somewhat of a surprise to find a 7% rate of agreement with this practice among the respondents. In the same question, the final suggested reason for visiting the cemetery was worded in the following manner in order to test the orthodoxy of the Protestant respondents: 'to ask for help and guidance' (from the ancestors). Theoretically almost six out of every hundred Chinese Protestants (5.4%) agreed with this sentiment.

The information supplied by the respondents indicates that the cult of the ancestors still plays a significant role in the Johannesburg Chinese community. According to the observations of an astute observer there is every likelihood that the cult will be practised with far greater intensity now that a large influx of Hong Kong and Republic of China citizens have made their home in Johannesburg (Interview Mr SL Fok: 16.4.1989). There has been a marked increase in the sale of cultic items, according to Mr W Pon, the managing director of the largest Chinese provisions company in the country (Interview: 21.3.1989). In an interview with Mr W-J Hu the Consul-General of the Republic of China on Taiwan (5.6.1989) the writer was informed that close to four thousand Chinese from that country had come to live and work in South Africa.

6.5 CHRISTIAN RESISTANCE TO THE CULT

The evidence shown above clearly demonstrates that the ancestor cult is still a very potent factor in the life of the Chinese Protestant movement in Johannesburg. Of equal importance is the strong element of Christian resistance to the cult which the survey pin-pointed. It is to this aspect of the study to which attention is now drawn.

6.5.1 Non-attendance at the two major cultic festivals

The respondents were asked in Q9 how frequently they participated in the rite known as **Hung Cheng Jeat** (the Sweeping of the Graves Festival). The response to the 'don't' answer was slightly over half (52%). The 'non-applicable' variant elicited a further 5%. As these two categories of replies effectively indicate a negative answer, the combined negative response therefore totalled 57%.

The respondents were likewise asked how frequently they participated in 'the Burning of the clothes festival' (Q10). Those who opted for the 'non-applicable' category numbered six (5%) and those who returned a definite 'don't attend' answer totalled seventy or 54%. The sum of those who therefore did not attend 'the Burning of the clothes festival' amounted to 59%, marginally higher than for the festival of the Sweeping of the Graves.

The difference in the two non-attendance figures may be attributed to the respondents being somewhat more accustomed to the practice of visiting of the graves to place flowers upon them and in the process also to tidy up the grave. This act may have become the equivalent of the traditional ritual of Sweeping the Graves, a ritual chore which is not observed in Johannesburg.

The term 'Burning of clothes' is not a publicly practised rite but one which is observed at home.

When confronted with the request for some reasons for participating in the rite of Sweeping of the Graves the majority of the respondents indicated that they did not participate in the rite. Their response confirmed the earlier non-participatory figures.

6.5.2 The non-religious reasons for participating in the cultic festivals

A number of rather interesting reasons were put forward by the respondents for their participation in the two major ritual festivals.

Question eleven asked for the respondent's reasons for participating in the Hung Cheng festival. A significant role was played by the reason, 'loyalty to the clan' in that 17% of the replies offered this answer as a factor in their participation. 'Tradition' with twenty-six or 20% opting for this reason, proved to be a more popular category than 'clan loyalty'.

The most important reason for the majority (24%) was the respect which they had for the deceased.

Respondents were also asked in Q12 to choose and to suggest reasons for attending the annual Seu Yea festival. The pattern of response for Q11 was repeated to a large measure here.

The purpose of showing respect as the most important reason for visiting the graves during the Seu Yea festival returned a 21% response. Almost 16% of the respondents who attended Seu Yea indicated that the upholding of tradition was also a very important consideration. Clan loyalty enjoyed just under 12% of their choice and served as the third most important reason for their attending the Seu Yea activities.

Some of the respondents who participated in one or both of the two major festivals, offered the following remarks, some of which were rather frank.

'...only flowers taken in memory of ancestors' (Record 73).

'...because family expects it' (Record 84).

'...just for dinner' (Record 86).

'...attends in order not to upset parents-in-laws'

traditions' (Record 91).

'...as a family gathering' (Record 106).

'...of no significance to me. Husband's family's annual occasion and purely regard this as a family gathering' (Record 108).

These remarks were certainly not supportive of the cult but seemed rather as explanations or justifications for participating in the festival.

6.5.3 Non-religious reasons for visiting the cemeteries

Cemeteries play a pivitol role in the two main ancestral festivals and visits to the graves of the deceased may be said to reflect the measure of filiality of the living to the dead.
One of the survey questions (Q46) read as follows: Apart from attending funerals, for what other reason/s do you visit the cemetery? Five answers were suggested with an opportunity for the respondent to furnish other reasons.

The suggested reason to tidy the grave netted sixty-eight responses (53%) while the placing of flowers on the graves elicited 106 (82%) positive answers. Those surveyed thought that the reason 'to pay respects' to one's deceased ancestors only deserved sixty-six (51%) responses. This was an unexpectedly low figure but it does not seem too low when compared with the even lower percentages for the same answer in Q11D and Q12D where the responses were 24% and 20% respectively.

A number of respondents took the trouble to supply other reasons for either going to or staying away from cemeteries.
The following excerpts clearly reflect the importance their authors attached to the idea of 'respect'.

'I see the act of tidying the deceased's grave and placing flowers on the grave as an act of respect in itself, so no other act of respect

is necessary' (Record 3).

'To pay respect' (Record 7).

'Mainly to pay respect' (Record 31).

'Respecting my in-law's wishes' (Record 40).

'As told to do so - respect parents and grandmother's wishes' (Record 41).

'Respecting my mother's wishes' (Record 77).

Two respondents indicated that they would go to the cemetery in support of a friend.

'Sometimes go with a friend' (Record 50).

'Where support and concern to take a person to the cemetery is needed' (Record 79).

A number of individuals also emphasized remembrance and memories as reasons for their visiting the cemetery.

'To try to bring back fond memories of the deceased' (Record 63).

'Done as a remembrance' (Record 74).

'In remembrance only of loved ones, father, grandmother and sisters' (Record 110).

'It brings to my mind the good memories we had with our mother, i.e. nostalgic feelings get aroused' (Record 111).

Only one respondent gave the anniversary date of death as a valid reason for visiting the cemetery (Record 53).

Some respondents indicated that they did not visit cemeteries except, as one put it, 'for funerals' (Record 127). Another said that he does not visit cemeteries because he had no relatives in this country (Record 128). Two responses simply noted 'I never visit cemeteries' (Record 15) and 'I do not go to cemeteries' (Record 38).

In examining the non-religious reasons which Chinese Protestants have presented for visiting the cemeteries, it seemed natural to continue this line of enquiry by having a closer look at the

rejection of certain traditional beliefs associated with funerals.

6.5.4 The rejection of traditional funerary beliefs

6.5.4.1 The red and white packets

Chinese traditional funerary beliefs in Johannesburg have been strongly influenced by the dominant Cantonese people, many of whose customs have become an integral part of the larger community's lifestyle. The distribution of white and red packets, each with a 5c coin in it at funeral ceremonies, is an example of a Cantonese funerary practice which is linked to a set of beliefs. In Chinese culture, white is the colour of mourning and red is the colour of good fortune. The red packet is therefore called **lei shi** (good luck money).

The white packet which serves as a symbol of sympathy, is customarily handed to the mourner when he enters the funeral parlour.

The Cantonese believe that attending a funeral exposes an individual to the world of spirits, ghosts and evil forces whose unwelcome influences can be safeguarded against. The way to accomplish this is for the individual also to accept the red packet proffered after the funeral ceremony. On no account should the red and white packets be taken home because they transfer the 'bad luck' to the individual's home. The contents of the packets must therefore be spent before going home and the wrappings discarded.

One of the survey question (Q38) invited the responses of Chinese Protestants to a number of statements relating to certain funerary beliefs surrounding the red and white packets. The statements pointedly referred to the element of 'bad luck'. The final statement in the same question dealt with the leading of

the spirit of the deceased from the cemetery to a place of residence. Respondents were also asked to respond to this rite.

An overview of the various responses will be given first, which will be followed by a more in-depth analysis.

The first statement read as follows: 'Christian mourners should accept the white and red packets which are traditionally handed out at Chinese funerals.'
There was a 47% response in favour of this statement. Those who disagreed with it numbered 28%. A significantly large number of people (16%) indicated their uncertainty and 7% simply admitted that they did not know.

The second statement was: 'The red packets distributed after the funeral counteract the bad luck which funerals cause.'
The support for this statement dropped to 16% while the majority of the respondents showed their disagreement with this statement by registering a 66% response. Those who were not certain of their view numbered marginally under 9% and those who said that they did not know numbered slightly under 8%.

The 'flip-side' to the former question was stated in the following words: 'The money from the white and red packets will cause bad luck if taken home.'
The responses to this statement yielded the following results. Eleven percent (11%) agreed with the statement and 74% disagreed with it. There were 9% who said that they were uncertain and 4% who said that they did not know.

The important statement which dealt with the leading home of the deceased's spirit from the cemetery, was worded in the following fashion: 'The soul of the deceased is led to the spirit tablet when the burning candle-joss stick is taken home after the funeral.'

The following were the responses: Only 4% of the respondents agreed with the statement while 64% disagreed with it. The number of uncertain respondents was 12% and the percentage of those who felt that they did not know rose to 18%.

Although the positive 47% response to the first statement indicated a fair rate of consensus among the Chinese Protestants with the view that Christian mourners should accept the red and white packets, it was nevertheless not a majority view. In addition to this supportive response in favour of retaining this funerary custom, two records also contained the very succint and relevant comments which encapsulated not only the dilemma but also suggested the fields in which the solution needs to be found. The comments were: 'so as not to offend' (Record 49) and 'we do it according to tradition' (Record 121).

The dilemma which faces the Christian Chinese at this point is whether he should reject certain aspects of his culture when he becomes a Christian. This particular instance of the acceptance or the rejection of the funeral packets is but a representative issue which will be more closely examined in the final chapter of this study.

The replies to the first statement from the respondents showed a significant measure of uncertainty (16%) on the part of the Chinese Protestants. The uncertainty expressed may be due to an insufficient consideration of the issue on the part of the individual Christian as well as the churches involved in this survey.

The second statement yielded a majority (66%) rejection of the concept of 'bad luck'. The same statement worded somewhat differently but which addressed the issue more directly, elicited a 74% rejection of the idea of 'bad luck' as associated with the funerary packets. As a result, the statistics reflecting 'don't know' (4%) category were therefore significantly lower when

compared with the 8% response in the second statement.

The statement dealing with the leading home of the soul after the funeral ceremony was rejected by 64% of the respondents. In other words, almost two out of every three respondents rejected the belief that the soul is led to the ancestor tablet by means of the burning candle-joss stick after the funeral.

Mr TL (26.3.1989) informed the writer during an interview that even as an ardent practitioner of the cult of ancestor veneration, he nevertheless associated himself with the younger generation's rejection of the more traditional view that the soul of the deceased indwells the ancestor tablet.

Even among those who actively participate in the cult, some disagreements exist as to where the spirit of the ancestors live after being led home from the cemetery.

Mr KC (Interview: 18.3.1989) indicated his belief that the soul of the deceased is led home from the cemetery by means of the burning candle-joss stick. He disagreed with the belief that the soul enters and lives in either the photograph of the deceased or the spirit tablet especially set up for him. He said that the soul was to be made welcome at home otherwise it would become a wandering spirit. The soul lives in the whole of the house and not only in the photograph or the spirit tablet.

The ritual of making offerings of food, libation, mock money and incense as part of the funerary traditions predates the present Johannesburg custom of distributing flowers on the graves. This western custom is now practised by many Chinese on a weekly basis but it is usually more strictly observed on the anniversary of the death of the deceased as well as at the Hung Cheng and Seu Yea festivals.

The burning of mock money usually accompanies the funerary rites

at the time of burial but thereafter mock money is offered at home on all the special cultic calendrical occasions.

The orthodox traditionalist in China will to this day make offerings at the grave on the appropriate occasions, but the traditionalist Chinese living in Johannesburg is reticent to engage in such rituals at cemeteries and therefore observes the rites at home.

The absence of making offerings on the graves in Johannesburg does not however mean the denial of certain cultic principles or beliefs. The following section deals with a selection of these beliefs related to the offerings to the ancestors.

6.5.4.2 The offerings made to the ancestors

One of the vital prerequisites in the whole system of offering food to the ancestors is the belief that they must be in need of the food and logically, that they are capable of partaking of it. The conceptual framework of ancestor worship is based upon the continued existence of the ancestors in a netherworld which is ruled according to the old style Chinese imperial bureaucracy. The 'physical needs' of the dead are similar to those of the living. These needs include a house, food, clothing, money, servants and means of transport. To meet these needs, paper models of cars, TV sets, watches and other items are transferred to the netherworld by incineratory means.

The Johannesburg Chinese Protestants responded to this issue in a number of ways. When they were asked to respond to the statement, 'The ancestors are able to partake of the food offered to them' (Q34C) their answers included ten (8%) which agreed that the ancestors were able to eat the food offered to them. Another sixteen (12%) were uncertain about their own response.

Upon closer examination it was found that fifteen (11.6%)

respondents who specifically acknowledged that they were Christians, were uncertain about the ancestors' ability to eat the food offered to them. This uncertainty of the Christians stands in stark contrast to those who said that they were not Christians, as none of them indicated that they were uncertain about this issue.

A further six respondents who specified themselves as 'Christians' opted to agree with the statement while only one person who claimed to be a non-Christian, agreed with this statement. Three of those who were uncertain of their Christian status, also agreed that the ancestors could partake of the food offered to them. The fact that some respondents claimed to be non-Christians may be due to the wide lattitude allowed in the qualifying requirements for the filling in of the questionnaires (vide: Appendix B).

It seemed therefore that the majority of those who were uncertain about the validity or otherwise of the statement in Q34C were Christians and that even though nine (7%) of the respondents were not Christians, they also disagreed with the statement and thereby lent their support to the more typical Christian standpoint. Only one person who was uncertain whether he was a Christian or not, indicated that he was uncertain about ancestors being able to eat food.

The uncertainty on the part of Christians on this issue must however be viewed in the light of the significant body of one hundred respondents (78%) who disagreed with the statement.

6.5.4.3 Respect and offerings

Was it possible to show respect without having to make offerings to the deceased (Q42A)? Will the departed spirits harm their offsprings if offerings are not made to them (Q42B)? These were two other aspects of funerary rites which were also set before

the respondents.

It appears from the results of the questionnaire that 115 (89%) of all the respondents believed that it was possible to respect one's ancestors without having to make offerings to them. In fact thirty (23%) of the respondents 'strongly agreed' with this view. The fact that only seventy-three (57%) self-designated 'Christians' 'agreed' with this view, was a surprise when this figure was compared with the more significant overall response of 115 (89%). The conclusion forced upon one is that many Christians did not appreciate this particular statement, which found widespread acceptance even among those who practised aspects of the cult and those who were not Christian by conviction

Do the ancestral spirits respond to their offsprings on a 'tit-for-tat' basis, that is, if offerings are not made to them, they would harm the living (Q42B)? Only thirty-seven (29%) respondents who designated themselves as 'Christians' disagreed with the statement.

Two of the three 'non-Christians' in the sample, disagreed with the statement while two of the 'Christians' agreed with it. Only 7% of the respondents registered an 'uncertain' answer. The total response to this question therefore indicates that the completion of this particular question by the respondents left much to be desired.

6.5.4.4 Mock funeral money and the Christian

Mention was made earlier that mock money was also offered to the ancestors to help pay for their expenses in the spirit world. As this topic was considered to be of some importance, it was decided to formulate a very personal question to ascertain the respondent's view. The question (Q41) read as follows: 'Please pardon the question, but would you like mock money to be burnt

for you in the distant future?'

Four (3%) answered 'yes'. This group consisted of two 'Christians', one 'non-Christian' and one who was uncertain of his Christian status. Those who said that they did not want mock money burnt for them were in the majority with ten (8%) of the supporters coming from the group of thirteen (10%) who are uncertain of their Christian status, two from 'non-Christian' group and 102 (79%) from the 'Christians'. Six of the seven (5%) 'uncertains' were from the 'Christian' group.

The respondents overwhelmingly rejected the notion by 91% (117) that mock money should be burnt for them one day.

The evaluation of the responses to some of the key cultic issues examined thus far indicates that the majority of the Chinese Protestants have adopted a strong resistance to participation in the rites.

6.5.5 Measures taken by the churches to counteract the cult

The strong resistance on the part of the Chinese Protestants to certain of the cultic rites presupposes that they were provided with a rationale for their attitude imbibed from their own study of the Bible or from the teachings available in their churches. There is no doubt that many aspects of the ancestor cult conflict with the teachings of the Christian faith. The natural line of question to follow is to enquire what measures the churches have taken to inform and to instruct their members and adherents concerning the cult, and where necessary, to warn them about the unacceptable aspects of it.

6.5.5.1 The Southdale Baptist Church

The Southdale Baptist Church conducted special studies on ancestor worship during 1987 especially with the Cantonese Bible

Study group, according to Mr G Mooi, one of the deacons of the church (Interview: Jan 1988). No specific sermons were preached on this subject nor were the Sunday school or any other group involved in any such studies.

6.5.5.2 The Chinese Assembly of God

The Chinese Assembly of God conducted a seminar 'on deliverance' in 1988 and included an examination of the cult of the ancestors. This seminar included Biblical counselling and it was reported by Mr V Lun, the assistant lay pastor, that the Chinese responded positively to the seminar. Many of them realized for the first time what spiritual aspects were involved in the rites that they had been practising for so long. They became more alert to these issues as a result of the seminar. Mr Lun indicated that the seminar was to be repeated later in 1989 (Interview: 13.3.1989).

6.5.5.3 The Chinese Christian Fellowship

In conversation with Mr KC (Interview: 26.3.1989) one of the leaders in the Chinese Christian Fellowship, the writer asked if any special programmes were being undertaken to help guide the elderly Chinese in matters relating to ancestor worship. He indicated that the topic had been tackled in his own Bible study group. No definite programme exists in the Chinese Christian Fellowship to counteract the ongoing practice of the cult in Johannesburg.

None of the other churches in which Chinese worship, dealt with this subject as it was not a topic of sufficient interest to the largely non-Chinese congregations.

6.5.5.4 Counteractionary measures: Lay respondents' views

The respondents were also asked about the measures adopted by their churches to counteract the ancestral cult. Two questions

were put to the respondents. The first question was: 'How often has the subject of Ancestor worship been dealt with in your congregation?' (Q17).

The majority answered 'never' (30%) followed by those who answered 'non applicable' (19%). This latter group was composed of those who did not attend church (9%) or said that they were 'not practising Christians'(5%). Two were from non-Chinese congregations (1,5%) and five from the Southdale Baptist Church (3%).

Twelve percent said that the subject had 'seldom' been dealt with in their churches while the same percentage of respondents thought that the subject had been dealt with on an 'occasional' basis. On the other hand the same number of respondents adjudged that the subject had been dealt with 'often' while an equal number of people were 'uncertain' whether the subject had been dealt with at all in their churches.

One Sunday School teacher (Interview Mrs S Coskey: 9.3.1989) explained that she was 'uncertain' because she was never in church due to her commitment to her Sunday school class every Sunday morning. In this particular church the Sunday School classes were held concurrently with the main service. The subject was not dealt with at the family worship services when she was able to be in church with the Sunday school children.

A second question was posed to the respondents: 'Has a series of studies on ancestor worship been conducted for your congregation during the past two years?' (Q18)

The specified aspect of 'series of studies' resulted in a somewhat different response pattern. While the 'non applicable' category rose to 20%, those who were 'uncertain' only totalled 5% and those who said 'don't know' registered 9%. Those who asserted that no series of studies on this topic was held during the past two years accounted for 39% of the response and those

who were quite certain that such a course was held, registered a 25% assenting answer.

6.5.5.5 Evangelistic efforts by church members and adherents

If QQ 17 and 18 attempted to trace the track record of the churches as far as their responsibilities towards their congregations were concerned, Q45 placed some accountability on the members and adherents. 'Since being involved in a congregation, have you ever invited non-Christians to attend church activities with you?' This question was to serve a dual purpose as the respondent was to reply in terms of friends and relatives.

Sixty eight percent said that they had invited non-Christian friends to attend church activities with them but fewer (60%) had invited relatives. Nine percent of the respondents did not invite friends and 12% did not invite their relatives. As in QQ17 and 18 a similar 19% and 20% response was received in the 'non applicable' category.

It is of interest to note that respondents were more prone to invite non-Christian friends than non-Christian relatives to church activities.

6.5.5.6 Some special efforts in evangelism

Some of the activities organised by some congregations were especially geared to reach the elderly Chinese who were more likely to be tradition-orientated and therefore more prone to be involved with the cultic practices.

The Southdale Baptist Church has had a special programme known as the Christian Care for Elderly Chinese (CCEC) since June 1977 (CMB 3:14.6.1977). Details of the organisation and its special ministry have been dealt with in the previous chapter.

The presence of the two elderly deaconesses on the Southdale Baptist church executive helps to project the image of the church as one in which the elderly Chinese can live a spiritually fulfilling life without having to participate in the cultic rites associated with the ancestors either in their homes or in the community.

To what extent is this possible though? Some of the old ways have become so deeply ingrained in the life-style of the Johannesburg Chinese. Selected aspects of this problem will be looked at in the next section.

6.6 CONFLICTS OF CONVICTIONS IN THE COMMUNAL OBSERVANCE OF CERTAIN CULTIC RITES

The individual Chinese Christian is torn between his religious convictions and certain rites which contain elements of religious and non-religious, ethnico-cultural overtones. Whatever his personal religious convictions might be on theological or dogmatic issues, he continues to function as a member of the larger community in which his views may not enjoy popular support. If he completely rejects the practices of the community, he is considered a rebel. Yet, if he attends or participates in certain cultic observances, there is every likelihood that some of his more evangelical fellow-believers will think ill of him.

This dilemma which the individual experiences can also be a problem to a church, as illustrated by the following example.

6.6.1 The allowance of cultic rites at a 'Christian' funeral

The writer who formerly served as a minister of the Southdale Baptist Church allowed the burning of mock money and joss sticks at the funeral parlour before the Christian part of the ceremony

and at the cemetery after he had conducted the ceremony and had left the grave site.

6.6.1.1 Reasons and conditions for allowing the rites

The reason for this almost anomalous and unorthodox approach, which some Christians found unacceptable, had as its main purpose the utilization of the opportunity to preach the gospel.

This practice was allowed only when specific situations called for it. For example a church member or adherent's relative died and the Christian wished to have his relative buried by a Christian minister. The older relatives however insisted on the observance of certain cultic rites.

The minister could either forego the opportunity to preach the Gospel to a 'captive' audience in order to retain a particular theological viewpoint or he could quote the Pauline principle, of becoming all things to all men that by all means some might be saved (I Corinthians 9 KJV).
The burning of the mock money and the joss sticks was a concession made only when the ceremony was held at the funeral parlour and never at the church.

6.6.1.2 Congregational awareness of church policies

Question 21 was posed to ascertain whether the Chinese Protestants knew the policies of their churches concerning the burning of funeral articles before, during or after the funeral service. The funeral parlour, the church, a hall and the graveside were the four venues listed. Between 15-17% of the respondents said that they 'don't know'. Depending on the venue, those who thought that it was not appropriate to burn funeral articles at one or other of the four venues numbered between eighty-five (66%) and ninety-one (71%). More people (71%) considered that funeral articles should not be burnt at church

than at any other venue. The respondents returned a negative reply ranging from 66-68% for each of the other venues.
Comment on this subject was requested from the respondents (Q22), an opportunity which 24% of the respondents used.

All four (3%) respondents who supported the burning of funeral articles in special circumstances were involved at the Southdale Baptist Church. Significantly, three of the four were in leadership roles. Two of the responses cited the need to avoid family friction (Records 61,66) while one respondent noted that the church states that it does not identify with the rites if the family should request the rites (Record 98). Record 127 commented 'If the family of the deceased is a non-Christian, then the church will allow the family to burn funeral articles after the funeral service.'

6.6.1.3 A selection of responses

A few respondents contributed some unusual remarks:
One who had marked himself as 'not a practising Christian' adopted a very condescending attitude on behalf of the church members and ministers by saying, 'As far as I know the church members or minister do not explicitly express any disagreement when this happens - I think they are content that at least they have given the deceased a Christian burial' (Record 3).
Another respondent wrote in a pro-Chinese-culture fashion when he stated, 'Western orientated churches do not consider Chinese cultural perspectives'. His own desire was 'to discover the purposes of the rites and to use that knowledge in Christian witness' (Record 78).

One respondent who apparently did not know much about the cultic rites, thought that the articles burnt were of such a nature that they 'could have been donated to charity or to other unknown people in need' (Record 50).

The majority of Christians surveyed replied with a definite 'no'. While most respondents supplied reasons for not favouring the rite, some of these reasons could be interpreted as dogmatic and judgemental in tone.

Four records simply stated 'Don't' and six others stated, 'Worship only true God therefore do not allow it.' Two others said, 'Don't allow it at all' and a variation of it, 'We do not allow it.'

Some of the other replies read as follows:
'Christians should not practise such rites' (Records 47,48).
'Do not mix Chinese and Christian funeral forms' (Record 62).
'Leaders won't participate' (Record 63).
'I don't think a church should participate in burning incense' (Record 71).
'Not according to Christian principles' (Record 72).
'This is against the Word of God' (Record 119).
'Funeral articles should not be burnt' (Record 77).
'I feel that this should not be allowed' (Record 111).

One respondent provided an unusual twist to the usual pattern of answers by writing, '...having a church service for the decease, we do not burn incense. Only on the next day do we burn articles to them' (Record 95). This pragmatic approach found an echo in the response which said, 'This practice should not be allowed at the church, but the family cannot be prevented from carrying this out at the other venues' (Record 129) and presumebly at other times!

The response which summed up the whole problem noted, 'Churches should not allow funeral articles to be burnt especially if the funeral is held at the church or if a Christian minister of religion is officiating at the funeral' (Record 1).

6.6.1.4 Overwhelming rejection of 'mixed' funerals

In a subsequent question (Q24) the respondents were asked a similar question but in a more direct manner, 'Should the burning of funeral articles be allowed at Christian funeral services?' This question sought to establish the personal response and therefore differed in purpose from the previous one which tested the effectiveness of communication within the congregation as far as church polity was concerned between the leadership and lay membership.

Those who answered 'yes' numbered eight (6%). The 'no' answer category registered 81% while those who said they were 'uncertain' and who 'did not know', accounted for a further 11%. The majority of Chinese Protestant Christians indicated by a massive 81% choice that they were not in favour of funeral articles being burnt at Christian funeral services.

The cult of the ancestors is an invasive institution in that attitudes towards it can also determine whether Christian diners should eat or refrain from eating meals served at communal dinners or even in private homes.

6.6.2 <u>The question of food first offered to the ancestors</u>

6.6.2.1 Food offered at home

In homes where the ancestor cult is practised, it is theoretically believed that the ancestors either have free movement all over the house (Interview Mr KC: 18.3.1989) or according to the more traditional view, that the ancestors only live within the spirit tablet or photograph of the deceased.

Whichever view is held, the ancestors are offered some food on special occasions before the diners are served. Such special occasions include the death anniversary, New Year's eve, any

family celebration held at home as well as the festival of the Sweeping of the Graves in March-April and the Burning of Clothes festival in August-September.

6.6.2.2 Food offered at restaurants

What is not generally known is that the cult of ancestor veneration is observed even at some wedding feasts held at restaurants. A sample of the dinner is prepared and placed on a makeshift ancestor shrine at the restaurant. The ancestors of the groom's family are invited to partake of the food before the family and guests as a mark of respect (Interview Mr W Song: 17.4.1989).

6.6.2.3 The purpose of Q35

In the light of the Pauline passages in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 concerning food offered or dedicated to idols, it was decided to test the response of the Chinese Protestants on this issue by asking the question 'Would you eat food which you knew was first offered to the ancestors?' (Q35).

6.6.2.4 The responses to Q35

This question evoked a high response rate as only 3% of the respondents failed to complete this question. A further 7% said that they were uncertain as to whether they would eat the food. The 'yes' category netted 43% and the 'no' category 47%. The two results therefore compared very favourably, with the latter group marginally stronger by 4%.

This lack of a clear majority indicated that the Chinese Protestants were basically divided on the issue, which had at its heart a Biblical principle which could be interpreted in more ways than one. This lack of a single interpretation became very clear in the following responses to Q36 in which those surveyed

were asked to give their main reasons for their 'yes' answer in Q35.

Six different categories of answers were distinguishable. The four smaller categories were: the non-committal (2%), the culture-orientated (3%), the theologico-conditional (2%) and the theologico-pragmatic (2%). The other two categories were much larger: the pragmatic (22%) and the theological (10%).

The responses were as varied as they were interesting. 'Subject to my individual beliefs and understanding of the rites' (Record 17) and 'it doesn't make any difference to me' (Record 104) are examples of the 'non-committal' category of answers because they fail to provide any objective reasons.

Examples of the 'culture-orientated' reasons are: 'Tradition' (Record 26), 'It tastes better' (Record 76), 'Why not? the offering is probably only symbolical anyway' (Record 82) and 'It's part of the meal' (Record 91).

A few respondents used the approach that they were prepared to eat the food only if certain theological preconditions were met. For example, one said that he would eat the food 'if unavoidable'. He believed that 'the food is not blessed or otherwise' (Record 49). Another said 'If not a stumbling block or does not compromise my stand' (Record 50). The third respondent in this category noted, 'On condition that I know I'm not consciously compromising with evil' (Record 79).

Those who took the combined theological and pragmatic approach to the question linked aspects of their faith with pragmatic considerations. One respondent declared, 'I don't worship ancestors and I don't waste food'. He also added that if the food should contain ash from the joss sticks, he would give the food to the dogs (Record 95). Another said that he would eat the food 'provided food's clean, no incense burnt and nothing else

done'. He further said that he disbelieved ancestor worship (Record 110). The final example in this category simply stated 'There is no harm as long as you pray over the food' (Record 116).

Only thirteen (10%) of those surveyed indicated that they based their reasons for eating food first offered to the ancestors, on Biblical teaching or for theological considerations. The following are representative samples of this class of answers.

'Because worshipping ancestors does not mean anything to me...' (Record 15).
'Because God sanctified and provided it. However, perhaps to show your standpoint as Christian, one should not' (Record 86). An element of doubt was present in this answer.
'According to Romans, its OK unless it causes someone to stumble' (Record 98).
'I do not think of the food having changed in anyway as I do not believe in ancestor worship'. The respondent asked the following interesting question in brackets 'Do you eat Halaal/Kosher chicken?' (Record 106).
'Food is from God and we give thanks to God' (Record 128).

The equivalent of eleven out of every fifty persons provided pragmatic reasons devoid of any religious connotations for eating food which they knew was first offered to the ancestors. The essence of this pragmatism lay in the refusal to waste good food.

This pragmatism was however linked to the hygienic state of the food if it was to be eaten (Records 36, 57, 62).
Some of the typical pragmatic statements were: 'If the food is edible, why not?' (Record 77), 'You don't waste food' (Record 102) and 'food should not be wasted' (Record 105).

Although the above reasons suggested by 43% of the respondents in

favour of eating the food seemed reasonable, their opponents who constituted 47% of the survey offered very different views.

Although sixty-one (47%) individuals indicated that they would not eat food which they knew was first offered to the ancestors, only fifty-seven or 44% of them supplied reasons (Q37). Because of the importance of many of these reasons, it was decided to categorise them into a few more types of reasons than was done with Q36.

Only one respondent (Record 15) used the argument that the 'food remains the same', an argument similar in content and logic as found in some replies to Q36.
A 'conditional' reason was also supplied by one respondent as indicated in his remark that he would not eat the food 'unless it has been washed again' (Record 13).
Only two of the respondents used the following rather unusual reasons for not eating the food: 'because it was not given to me but to them (the ancestors)' (Record 42) and 'I would feel strange eating others' gifts' (Record 52). These two respondents appeared to have possessed an unusual sense of propriety.

Nine respondents (7%) compared the ancestors with idols. Some remarks were more direct than others as the following examples show. 'Christians do not worship idols nor have anything to do with them' (Record 4); 'As a Christian I do not partake in any worship of idols' (Record 7); '...would be idol worship' (Record 31); 'You should not eat food that was offered to idols' (Record 69); '...as it is offered to idols' (Record 124). This group probably had I Corinthians chs 8-10 in mind.

Of the fifty-seven replies rejecting the eating of food first offered to the ancestors, only eight or 6% of those surveyed quoted or referred to a scriptural injunction which they interpreted as teaching against the eating of food first offered to the ancestors. The majority of those who quoted or referred

to the Bible made mention of 1 Corinthians 8 and some also added 1 Corinthians 10. One respondent wrote, 'Biblical understanding taken from 1 Corinthians 8:1-13' (Record 23), while two others quoted both passages from 1 Corinthians (Records 112, 113).

A few respondents were concerned at the impressions they were likely to make on others should they partake of the food. One person wrote 'People will think that I am taking part in the ritual' (Record 18) and another said, 'I would not like people to think that I shared their beliefs' (Record 129). Closely associated with these two persons were three others who were concerned not so much with what others may think of them, but that their actions may cause weaker Christians to stumble or to fall. One wrote 'I might be a stumbling block to my brother or sister in Christ' (Record 24). Two others stated, 'will not partake of it when with weaker brother lest he falls' (Record 38) and 'Refrain if eating such food will cause another person to fall' (Record 127). These responses were also based on New Testament principles.

A fairly large proportion of the survey returns (9%) provided 'statements' without any arguments as reasons for not eating the sacrificial food. The variety of these statements may be gauged from the following examples. 'un-scriptural' (Record 10), 'Food should not be eaten: offered to the dead' (Record 20), 'do not partake of worship' (Record 29), 'It had been put before the ancestors' (Record 32); 'Prefer not to partake because of the implications' (Record 49), 'not any particular reason' (Record 64) and 'Feel it may not be right' (Record 87).

Almost the same number of respondents (9%) as those who provided 'statements' provided declarations of allegiance to God or to Christ as reasons for not eating the food first offered to the ancestors. The following four examples provide an adequate sample of these replies. 'I worship the true and living God only' (Record 14), 'I'm a Christian' (Record 19), 'I belong to God'

(Record 51) and 'I do not believe or participate in ancestor worship as I am a Christian' (Record 84).

One respondent equated the eating of food first offered to the ancestors as 'the equivalent to eating food offered to Satan' (Record 48).

The following were among the most interesting comments submitted on the question of not eating food first offered to the ancestors.

'The food had been used in worship but ...I'm not superstitious' (Record 33).
'Repulsive! I'm not starving!' (Record 39).
'To show respect' (Record 53).
'Eating it would be participating in the ritual' (Record 74).
'Second hand food' (Record 80).
'It had been offered to the dead therefore I would not eat it' (Record 115).
'The food hasn't been blessed by the Holy Spirit' (Record 117).

The reactions by some of the respondents to the question of food offered to ancestors differed very widely; some equated the worship of ancestors with idolatry while others interpreted the eating of the food as being tantamount to participating in the worship rituals of the ancestors. Those who argued in favour of eating the food by and large saw no sense in the wasting of good food which after all was provided by God. This pragmatic Christian approach was further strengthened with the stated rejection of the beliefs associated with the worship of the ancestors.

Having considered the responses by the Chinese Protestants to the question of eating or not eating food first offered to the ancestors, one can further examine the measure of Christian zeal in certain important aspects such as the show of respect to the

ancestors and the frequency with which Christians offer mock money.

6.6.3 An assessment of Christian zeal in the light of cultural practices

6.6.3.1 Christian zeal assessed

Two simple questions were asked to establish the extent of evangelical zeal on the part of the Chinese Protestants. The first question (Q43) attempted to gather alternate ways and means for the Chinese Protestant Christians to express their respect to the ancestors. These suggestions were to be outside the established ancestral cultic patterns. The second question invited responses to the question, 'Since being involved in a congregation, have you tried to discourage others from practising the burning of mock money?' (Q44).

6.6.3.2 Discouraging others from burning mock money

The answers to the latter question are examined first.
Thirty five percent or forty-five respondents said that the question did not apply to them. Those who replied that they did not discourage others from practising the burning of mock money numbered forty-six (36%) while only thirty-five respondents (27%) indicated that they had indeed tried to discourage others from offering mock money to ancestors.
Amongst those who answered that they did not discourage people from burning mock money were four respondents who took the trouble to write the following remarks on their questionnaires: 'no opportunity to do so' (Record 32), 'up to the individual' (Record 47), 'not our business' (Record 48) and 'one is not given the opportunity to advise' (Record 61).

These statistics provide verification of the validity of the four reasons. In other words, the witness of Chinese Protestants to

those who practised the rites was limited by one or more of the four basic reasons quoted above. The first remark of not having opportunity to discourage people in this practice is natural in the course of events as strangers, non-relatives or even those in the same peer group are not expected to offer advice in these delicate matters at a time when the affected family is experiencing sorrow. This explanation may also be applied to the fourth comment which indicated that a person is not given the opportunity to advise.

The remark that it is left up to the individual to practise or not to practise the burning of mock money, is a strong reflection of the Chinese tradition of not interfering in religious matters. This principle especially applies to outsiders. However, it is the combined counsel of the older members of the extended family which ultimately determines the type of funeral to be conducted.

The viewpoint that it is not the business of an outsider if a family wishes to burn mock money, fits in with the attitude generally held by the Chinese of not interfering in other people's affairs.

6.6.3.3 Alternate ways to show respect to ancestors

The other major question which was designed to help determine whether the Chinese Protestant Christian could come up with alternate ways whereby the ancestors can be shown respect (Q43) yielded some interesting answers.

Ninety six (74%) respondents made comments as to how Christians could show respect to the ancestors. Although most comments could be classified as suggestions, a few respondents were against the very idea of showing respect to the ancestors or even mourning for the dead.

Most of the replies centred upon the act of remembrance. Various combinations were suggested, such as the two which suggested 'remembering the dates of their death' (Records 10,75), and the variation 'remember them, especially on birthdays and anniversaries' (Record 94); 'remembering what they did for you and keeping their memory alive' (Record 91), 'remember his good qualities...' and '...never judge them by what (bad things) they have done' (writer's brackets) (Records 38, 42).

Four of the respondents suggested that the ancestors should be remembered but that no worship should be involved (Records 7,8,9,22). Three persons also thought that having a memorial service would be one way of showing the ancestors respect (Records 3, 98, 99).

Almost 8% of those surveyed simply suggested that the ancestors should be remembered. The following are but two samples of ten similar answers: 'Remember them' and 'always remembering them' (Records 4, 40).

Nine percent of the Johannesburg Chinese Protestants suggested that remembrance of the ancestors should be on a personal basis, as the next three extracts indicate: 'Keeping them alive in your memories', 'by remembering them in love', and 'just have good or fond memories of the deceased' (Records 5, 31, 52).

A few respondents thought that one should always speak well of the ancestors (Records 36, 88) and speak of them to others in a respectful manner (Records 56, 66). These were some of the ways whereby the Christian could show respect to the ancestors.

One person mentioned that the ancestors' names and their existence should be honoured, or put differently, one should not 'blasphemize' the ancestors (Record 15).

Two persons indicated that one should show respect to parents while they are alive (Records 41, 59).

The majority of those responding to Q43 chose the grave as the locality where the ancestors should be shown respect. This does not necessarily mean that the respondents who opted to show respect by 'remembering' the ancestors in one or more ways, necessarily excluded the taking of flowers to the cemetery or visiting the graves in their use of the term 'remember'. However, of the Chinese Protestants surveyed, one out of every four persons (25%) indicated that the taking of flowers to the grave was the primary way of showing respect to their ancestors.

One respondent specified that visiting graves at the cemetery on a regular basis and remembering the fond memories of the departed relatives was the means whereby he showed respect to his ancestors (Record 80).

Seven questionnaires contained allusions to theologically-based comments. Two comments were irrelevant to the topic (Records 16,17), the third simply stated 'by leading a Christian way of life' (Record 28). The following two replies provided more advice than suggestion; 'Examine the motives behind the practice, ask yourself - what onlookers will think about your actions and finally show care and concern but be firm and honest about your beliefs' (Record 73): 'One still has to love one's neighbour and so compassion for deceased's relatives can be exercised. Concern and care can be actualized' (Record 79).

Two comments appeared to be based on an erroneous interpretation of Scripture.
'As Christians we worship God of the living according to Matthew 22:32 and the Lord Jesus Christ said Follow me and leave the dead to bury their own dead Matthew 8:22. With this understanding we do not have to respect ancestors' (Record 23). The final comment in this vein coldly stated: 'Dead to bury the dead. Wasting time' (Record 39).

6.6.3.4 Some comments which seem more relevant

'One cannot show respect to them as they are dead' (Record 33).
'Recall family history to point out contribution to a person's life, family life and society; God's working in family: reading to children family's development' (Record 50).
'Difficult question. I seldom go to the grave' (Record 58).
'By remembering them and the good they taught us. Even though we don't burn joss sticks we still have love and respect for them' (Record 61).
'Do not defile but respect the resting place of the deceased' (Record 63).
'Memory of ancestors is a way to show respect' (Record 78).
'You show respect for the ancestors for the sake of onlookers. What you feel is in your heart' (Record 82).
'As long as you remember the good things about them, not necessary to have to show' (Record 87).
'Participate in the traditions without actually worshipping the ancestors. Respect traditions and be sensitive to the elderly's views' (Record 90).
'Christians can show respect by respecting the memory of them and respecting their views' (Record 93).
'Follow Christian faith but also go along with traditional Chinese beliefs' (Record 100).
'By remembering them in your prayers' (Record 104).
'A get together of immediate family on or near the date the ancestor passed away' (Record 109).
'By being guided by their wisdom and upholding their teachings of rights and wrongs and respecting elders' (Record 110).
'Do not believe in ancestors therefore do not mourn' (Record 119).
'Place flowers at graveside when I miss the deceased' (Record 129).

One response which seemed to have included a number of the other suggestions for showing respect to the ancestors, was from Record

50. Although tersely put, it contained the following useful suggestions: recall the family's history in order to point out the ancestor's role in the moulding of the individuals' lives as well as any other activities which may have influenced the family and society at large. The suggestion also included the need to emphasize the way God had worked within the family. This particular approach did not encourage any un-Biblical ways of paying tribute to the deceased nor did it minimise the role of God in the development of the family. It sought to give credit where it was due. A number of respondents also suggested that the offsprings should remember the moral teachings or the good the ancestors had taught them (Record 61).

As far as the thought-provoking ideas were concerned, the words from Record 33 read rather 'cold' in print: 'One cannot show respect to them as they are dead'. This was a remark quite out of keeping with Chinese traditional thinking. This comment was neither Christian nor atheistic. In the New Testament one is reminded to observe the Holy Sacrament as a memorial of the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:20-26 TLB). Even atheism in Russia has encouraged a high level of respect for Lenin, Marx and Engels. Thus, to be against Chinese tradition is not necessarily to be in favour of Christianity.

Another thought-provoking idea dealt with the need to 'remember the dead in prayers' (Record 104). This was also a very un-Protestant practice as far as the Free Church movement is concerned. The dead may be prayed for in certain other quarters of the Christian communion but not in the Free Churches and definitely not in the Johannesburg Chinese Protestant churches.

One respondent suggested that the family should have a get together on or near the date the ancestor passed away (Record 109). Another very typical Chinese attitude concerning the dead was echoed in the remark that as long as one remembered the good things about the ancestors, it will not be necessary to make a

show of one's feelings (Record 87).

Many Chinese do not worship the ancestors but they do participate in the traditions. Chinese conservativism and the concept of filial piety were both catered for in the comment: 'Participate in the traditions without actually worshipping the ancestors. Respect traditions and be sensitive to the elderly's views' (Record 90). Similar sentiments were also expressed in Record 110.

An idealistic comment was also made: 'Follow Christian faith but also go along with traditional Chinese beliefs' (Record 100). The problem of continuity and discontinuity begs to be addressed in such a statement.

6.7 A SUMMARY: THE STATE OF THE ANCESTOR CULT IN THE JOHANNESBURG CHINESE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

6.7.1 Persistence of the ancestor cult

The cult of the ancestors, which centres around funerary and post-funerary beliefs and rites, continues to persist in the Johannesburg Chinese Protestant community. This state of affairs should be considered as normal for a number of reasons. The Chinese Protestant community continues to grow and those who join with the various churches add to the corporate church life their culture and traditional perspectives which include ancestral rites.

Any survey of such a diverse church community will reveal a whole range of viewpoints which emanate from some who have been Christians for a number of decades and on the other end of the scale, from others who have only recently converted to the Christian faith. The informal nature of churches and the absence of strict tests of 'orthodoxy' on all matters of faith and conduct, will result in some adherents and members adopting some

unusual beliefs or participating in some strange practices.

The level of knowledge as touching what the convert should know about his new-found faith, how he should worship and what the church frowns upon as 'un-Christian' are some of the very many aspects which the convert has to master over a period of many years.

6.7.2 Three major perspectives examined in chapter six

Chapter six examined the state of the ancestor cult in the Chinese Protestant community from three main perspectives: The prevalence of the ancestor cult (Ch 6.4), Christian resistance to the cult (Ch 6.5) and conflicts of convictions in the communal observance of certain cultic rites (Ch 6.6). The two main sources of information for this chapter were the interviews and a major questionnaire. The interviews were conducted simultaneously with the administration of the major questionnaire over a six-week period.

6.7.3 The prevalence of the ancestor cult

The prevalence of the ancestor cult within the Johannesburg community was confirmed by a number of sources.

6.7.3.1 The use of a 'youth' questionnaire

To test the prevalence of the cult amongst the general public of Johannesburg, a random sample of one hundred young unmarried sportsmen and sportswomen who were not necessarily Protestants, were asked to indicate the frequency with which their families at home burnt joss sticks and offered food to the ancestors. After analysing the answers, one of the most significant conclusions reached was the fact that even in homes with relatively young sets of parents who were probably in their mid-forties to mid-fifties, aspects of the ancestral cult continued to be regularly

practised (Ch 6.1.2).

6.7.3.2 Important data from the 'major' questionnaire

Of special significance was the fact that according to the major questionnaire, four out of every ten of the 129 respondents were reared in homes in which they were taught the cultic practices. Furthermore, 20% of those in the 21-30 age group indicated that they regularly practised the rites (Ch 6.4.2.2).

The two major cultic community events known as the Ch'ing Ming, which is sometimes referred to as Hung Cheng, and Seu Yea continue to be attended by 42% and 38% of the respondents respectively. While a technical difference exists between 'attending' and 'participating', those who attend usually also participate by placing some flowers on the graves of relatives and fellow clan members. No further ritual is involved. There is no bowing, nor any burning of joss sticks or mock money at the cemeteries (Ch 6.4.3).

The ritual translated as the Inviting home of the soul ceremony in which the soul of the deceased is ritually invited back into his ancestral home in China, was familiar to all age groups of the Chinese Protestant community (Ch 6.4.4).

The practice of sending ancestor tablets, also known as spirit tablets for safe-keeping in overseas Buddhist temples, was a practice known to a number of the respondents (Ch 6.4.5).

Another very strong proof that the ancestor cult continues to influence the Chinese Protestants is the fact that almost six out of every hundred Chinese Protestants agreed with the sentiment that they visit the graves to ask for help and guidance from the ancestors (Ch 6.4.5).

6.7.3.3 Influx of Chinese from Hong Kong and Republic of China

The present influx of Hong Kong and Republic of China citizens has caused the practice of the ancestor cult in Johannesburg to be practised with greater intensity. According to Mr W Pon (Interview: 21.3.1989) the sale of cultic items has already risen sharply. This phenomenon may encourage the practice of the cult in the local community in the future.

The evidences therefore point to the prognosis that the ancestor cult is heading for a period of growth in the Johannesburg area.

6.7.4 Christian resistance to the cult

6.7.4.1 Insufficient awareness on the part of the church leaders

The church leaders themselves lack a familiarity with the underlying cultural principles, the history and the religious development of the cult. No sense of real urgency was detected by the writer to apply themselves in the pursuit of information related to the ancestral cult. The survey data further indicated that the church leaders were not fully aware of the extent of the hold which the ancestor cult has on their members and adherents.

6.7.4.2 Stand adopted by the older Christians

Information from the questionnaire indicates that the older Chinese converts to the Christian faith tend to be extremely faithful to their new faith and almost completely reject any association with the traditional ancestral rites.

Ninety two percent of the respondents in the 41-50 age bracket indicated that they did not practise ancestor rites at home or elsewhere. Eighty eight percent of those in the 31-40 age

bracket replied that they also did not practise ancestor rites (Ch 6.4.2.2).

6.7.4.3 Attendance but no participation

Although a large number of Chinese Protestants continued to attend the two major cultic festivals, yet the majority of the respondents (57%) refused to participate or attend the festivals (Ch 6.5.1). Of those who attended the Hung Cheng, 24% indicated that they attended to show respect while 21% said the same of Seu Yea (Ch 6.5.2).

Furthermore, the most important reason for Chinese Protestants visiting the cemeteries was not for cultic purposes, but to pay respect to the ancestors (51%), to tidy the grave (53%) and to put flowers on the grave (82%) (Ch 6.5.3).

6.7.4.4 Rejection of certain traditional funeral rites

Chinese Protestants have also shown their rejection of the traditional funerary beliefs. Seventy four percent indicated that they did not hold to the concept of good and bad luck in connection with the red and white packets distributed at the funerals. Nor did 64% of the respondents believe that the soul of the deceased is led back home by means of a burning candle-joss stick. Seventy eight percent replied that they would not eat food which they knew was first offered to the ancestors and 91% of the respondents rejected the notion that mock money should be burnt for them in the future (Ch 6.5.4.4).

6.7.4.5 Churches conduct anti-ancestor cult studies

The larger churches have become aware of the influences of the cult and some basic counselling and Bible studies have been conducted with the ancestor cult in mind. Some church leaders plan to have such studies on a regular basis in the future.

There is no doubt that the various church programmes have contributed to a better understanding of the Christian faith and where aspects of the ancestor cult conflict with it.

6.7.5 Conflicts of convictions

Some conflicts have continued to exercise the minds of individuals, of families and other segments of the community, including one of the churches. It was therefore necessary for these reasons to examine the third major topic, 'Conflicts of convictions in the communal observance of certain cultic rites'.

6.7.5.1 In a church evangelistic programme

This third major topic was introduced within the framework of the Southdale Baptist Church which had a particular approach to the conflict of observing certain cultic practices within the context of a Christian funeral ceremony. In order to have the privilege of preaching an evangelistic message at funerals which are not held on the church premises, the successive ministers of the Southdale church permitted the burning of funerary articles in halls, at the funeral parlour and after the cemetery ceremony on condition that such rites should be completed and all the evidences of the rites be removed before the commencement of the Christian ceremony during which no burning of any articles was permitted.

This practice was not approved of by the majority of those who were surveyed and the church has already taken cognisance of the combined opposition of the Johannesburg Chinese Protestants to this policy. The message from 81% of the respondents was a definite 'NO' to the burning of articles when a church was involved (Ch 6.6.1.4).

6.7.5.2 At home and at some community functions

The invasive nature of the cult of the ancestors includes the domain of both private meals at home and community functions such as wedding feasts. A question which many Chinese Christians are constantly faced with is, 'Should Christians eat food which they knew was first placed in front of the ancestor's photograph or its equivalent, the ancestor tablet?' While this problem can be solved with relative ease at home, it tends to pose difficulties which are not unfamiliar in the New Testament (Romans 14 TLB; 1 Corinthians 8 & 10 TLB; Colossians 2:16 TLB).

A number of respondents equated the offering of food to ancestors with the offering of food to idols, a thought which deterred them from partaking of the food. When food is first offered to the ancestors at a wedding without the guests knowing about it, some Christians guests may find themselves at some considerable disadvantage. If they knew about the offering, would they still eat the food? What would they do if they were told after the meal?

The arguments from the Apostle Paul's writings may be applied to such a situation. One may ask whether the act of offering food to an idol, which is a non-existent entity should deny the Christian food which he believes God has provided and blessed? But what then of his so-called 'weaker' brother, whose conscience needs to be educated to guide him into a more Christo-centric way of life, thereby liberating his spirit and perhaps his palate in these matters?

The Chinese Protestant community is divided on this issue as the principle itself is open to divergent interpretations. These interpretations range from that of the pragmatist who does not wish to waste good food to that of the Christian with a tender conscience who feels that he has to act as his brother's keeper (Ch 6.6.2.4).

6.7.5.3 Cultural practices and Christian zeal

The final section of this chapter examined instances of Christian zeal in the context of certain cultural practices. Respondents were invited to share alternate ways and means of showing respect to the ancestors from the Christian perspective. Some useful insights were gained in examining some of the blase and cold responses of some Christians as well as some helpful ideas from a few other respondents.

The burning of mock money is not only a deeply ingrained cultural practice: it is also a normative rite. Its observance is relatively simple, its practice is logical according to the mindset of the Chinese traditionalist, and it provides a means whereby filial piety can be actualized for the welfare of the deceased. For these reasons the Johannesburg Chinese Protestants were asked whether they had discouraged others from burning this mock money since becoming involved in their churches. Certain traditional attitudes and values acted as constraints on the Christians to prevent their embarking on a programme of discouraging others from burning the mock money (Ch 6.6.3.2).

The Chinese Protestants showed marked differences in their responses to the various issues concerning the ancestor cult. A number of Chinese Protestants were unduly critical of certain aspects which fall into a grey area as far as culture and Christianity are concerned. Some of the slightly older Chinese Protestants on the other hand indicated a more open mind to certain non-religious aspects of Chinese culture which they felt did not threaten their Christian faith.

A fair percentage of Chinese Protestants also indicated that certain issues connected with the Chinese culture should not be allowed to fall away. The majority who thought like this belong

to a group in their late 40s and upwards and who have been Christians for twenty years or more. On the other hand, the majority of the senior citizens who converted to the Christian faith during the past ten years showed a strong resistance to involvement in any aspects of the ancestor cult.

This pattern in attitudes indicates that the period immediately following conversion to Christianity reflects a strong resistance to any ideology which might appear to contradict the tenets of the newly-found faith. However, after a reasonable passage of time during which growth had occurred in the faith and adaptations to one's own culture had been made, a more amenable attitude is evident towards both culture and faith. Apart from those who adopted a balanced attitude to both Chinese culture and their Christian faith, one also needs to account for the number of so-called Chinese Protestants who did not seem to know their minds on a number of important issues. Some of them indicated a lack of knowledge possibly because they did not want to commit themselves with either a definite 'yes' or a 'no'. Others in the group very likely lacked the knowledge and therefore replied 'don't know' or 'uncertain'.

The close ties which culture enjoys with religion further complicates matters for individuals who wish to retain their ethnic culture. The question which needs to be examined by the churches and by individuals is whether one can retain the cultural aspects of many of the Chinese religious rites without being bound by the non-Christian, non-Biblical aspects of such rites?

Some of the material which will be dealt with in the next chapter will examine in depth the principles with which Chinese Christians need to contend with in their development as ethnic Chinese and also as Christians.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN THE PERCEPTION OF CONCEPTS

7.1.1 Commonality of continuity and discontinuity

Even a cursory study of modern man and his changing cultural environment is bound to lead to the conclusion that man is faced with a choice of multiple behavioural patterns, many of which do not belong to his traditional culture.

The process of continuity and discontinuity occurs in every field of knowledge and social intercourse, whether one speaks of religious doctrines and rites or patterns of interaction between individuals and nations. It is therefore not only the Christian who is involved in this struggle to find the right behaviour to suit his beliefs.

The mind-boggling advancements in the technological fields have enabled the instantaneous transmission of video images, sound and printed information to almost any part of the world by means of portable ground-to-satellite communication equipment.

These modern means of information diffusion play an important role in the continuous process of cross-cultural fertilisation of ideologies and ideas.

This concluding chapter will consider the Chinese person's perceptions of concepts related to his traditional cultural background in conjunction with his Protestant faith. These perceptions will involve the important basis of human relationships (humanism), the nature of Chinese religion (eclecticism and syncretism), indigenization and contextualization, bowing as a form of respect, and the link between Chinese religion and culture (symbiosis).

In the second half of this chapter (7.2), death and funeral rites (obsequies), the moral rationale of the ancestor cult (filial piety), and the question of veneration or worship will be examined before the study is brought to a conclusion.

The following examples are not isolated cases and their striking newsworthiness make them all the more appropriate. These introductory paragraphs will serve as the background for an examination of the phenomenon of continuity and discontinuity as affecting Chinese Culture and Religion.

7.1.1.1 The European Community

A more explicit example of the global-village syndrome is the establishment of the European Community by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Such an institution may unite the people of Western Europe at the political and economic levels. It will not however, create a common culture or one common language; neither will it remove ethnic pride or change the unique cultural heritage which each member nation and race possesses.

7.1.1.2 The People's Republic of China

The Chinese in Mainland China had been allowed to participate in limited free trade both abroad and at home for about a decade. They had also been exposed to the concept and practice of democracy in their studies, by viewing foreign films and by reading imported literature.

The economic reforms on the home front promised reforms in the political sphere. Furthermore, the policies of Perestroika and Glassnost appeared to herald widespread economic and political reforms in the Communist world.

The pro-democracy student demonstration which ended in a massacre on 4th June 1989, aptly illustrates the continuity and

discontinuity syndrome in Chinese Communist politics.

Thus while the stringent socialistic economic practices of the previous three decades had been relaxed, the iron grip of the conservative Politburo on political reforms was not only maintained but further tightened.

7.1.1.3 Baptists and baptism by affusion

The religious experiences of mankind are formalised in rites and words. Occasionally a rite cannot be observed in the usual way and a substitute approach is used which may be more convenient or more acceptable in a particular situation. A Baptist minister will ordinarily refuse to baptise a believer by affusion. But a bed-ridden or wheel-chair bound believer will be baptised by affusion without any hesitation.

7.1.1.4 Roman Catholics and Chinese ancestor rites

The early Roman Catholic missionaries to China in the sixteenth century adopted much of the Chinese culture in terms of dress, eating habits and in their scholarly approach to life in order to make the Christian message more relevant to the Chinese. They discontinued or suspended their own culture to a large extent by adopting or adapting to the Chinese life-style. Matteo Ricci, the famous Jesuit missionary to China, had a high regard for the orthodox Confucian teachings. The offerings made to the ancestors did not conflict with his faith. However, he forbade the Catholic converts of the gentry class from taking part in the solemn ceremony honouring Confucius in which animal sacrifices were made in honour of the Sage (Antony & Chou 1989:37). The Rites Controversy which ensued over his support of ancestor veneration resulted in the opposing Dominicans and Franciscans winning the day. The ban on Chinese ancestor offerings was subsequently lifted by the Roman Catholic Church on 8 December 1939.

The problems of continuity and discontinuity are also present in the Johannesburg Chinese Protestant congregations in which Christians continue to deal with aspects of their culture which they do not interpret as being in conflict with their Christian faith.

This concluding chapter will therefore examine aspects of the dilemma which confront them: what may they retain of their culture and what should they surrender in their new allegiance to Christ and His Church?

7.1.2 The meeting of Chinese culture and Christianity

7.1.2.1 Priestless ancestor veneration in South Africa

When the early Chinese settlers came to South Africa, no Chinese monk or priest accompanied them. Each family was self-sufficient in its traditional spiritual realm because each family had its own ancestors to care for and hopefully, to be cared for by them. Each home could have an altar installed without much difficulty as it only required the writing of the name of a deity to show one's allegiance to that being (Interview Mr KC: 18.3.1989).
Nor was it necessary for the ancestor spirit tablets to be brought to this country as a duplicate could easily be made by writing on a piece of red paper the following words in Chinese: 'Ancestors of Such and Such clan reside here' (Interview Mr WK: 13.3.1989).

Funerals are conducted by a priest or a monk in traditional Chinese society in order that certain rituals may be performed. Chinese non-Christian funerals in Johannesburg lack the form and the tradition because there are no Chinese Taoist or Buddhist priests in the country.

With over 50% of the respondents to the questionnaire having been brought up in a home where ancestors were either worshipped or

venerated, (QQ 27-28) and who were taught how to participate in the rites of 'ancestor worship', the conversion to Christianity must have been accompanied by much trauma for the converts and for their parents. During the early years of Protestant work amongst the Chinese in Johannesburg at least one young man known to the writer was threatened with expulsion from his home should he submit to baptism. He happened to have been the firstborn son. His parents were afraid that their son would no longer observe the ancestral rites when he converted to the Christian faith.

7.1.2.2 The role of educational needs in the conversion of the Johannesburg Chinese

The conversion of even 'only' sons in a family no longer seems to constitute a threat of the same magnitude to the families as in the past. The credibility of the Christian faith as lived by the Christians has enabled the Chinese to be more amenable to the faith. The sympathetic help which the Chinese received from the Anglican and the Roman Catholic church schools when the community was desperate to have their children educated, also contributed to the favourable impression of Christianity within the community.

Some of the Chinese parents who sent their children to church schools actually converted and joined those churches to ensure that their children were admitted. The head of a prominent 'Christian' family who served as an informant, intimated to the writer that he had never really become a Christian but had joined a particular church for the sake of his children's education. Although he and his wife do not observe the usual ancestral rites at home, they participated fully in all the traditional rites when they visited their ancestral home in Mainland China recently (Interview Mr LY: 3.4.1989).

The principle therefore appears to be borne out that although external behaviour may be changed in order to satisfy the expected behavioural patterns within a sub-group, the traditional

cultic convictions may remain unchanged.

7.1.2.3 The Christian's inadequate knowledge of his culture

Nominal Christianity can be contrasted with an inadequate cultural perception. Conversion to the Christian faith necessitates certain changes in which aspects of one's traditional culture are at variance with one's faith. This requirement for Christian orthodoxy imposes upon the convert the task of judging a rite, an act or a communal activity in order to determine whether or not it militates against his Christian faith. In order to be able to make the judgement and to act upon it, the individual initially needs to be able to discern and perceive the key concepts related to his religious and cultural views.

The older Chinese do possess a historically diffused and internalised knowledge of the basics of their ethnic culture which have been learnt by formal educative means, by informal reading but more commonly by the widespread and informal process of chia chiao. In common with the younger Johannesburg Chinese community, not all the Chinese Protestants possess a sense of history or an awareness of their ethnic cultural distinctives. Nor are there clear signs of deep concern over the need to examine the problems of adapting aspects of their traditions to Christian values. The younger members of the community are less fortunate as most attend government and private schools where Chinese culture is not taught.

7.1.3 Humanism: the basis of human relationships

7.1.3.1 Confucian cardinal relationships

The rationale of the Confucian philosophy is based on humanism. Man's relationship with each other within the confines of family, clan and society at large is not dependent on supernatural forces such as help from a divine being or from ancestors. Men are

capable of interacting with each other in an acceptable and a refined manner whether it involves the king and his ministers, the husband and wife, father and son, older and younger brothers or friends. In each set of these cardinal relationships a 'superior' and an 'inferior' status exist and the status determines the norms of interpersonal behaviour. The individual's status is dependent on his social standing or his chronological age.

7.1.3.2 Confucian humanism and the ancestor cult

Orthodox Confucianism neither deals with the subject of spiritual beings, nor does it discourage the observance of rites associated with the ancestors. In fact Confucius commented on the practice of the rites in Analect 3:12 that these should be performed with utter sincerity 'as if the ancestors were present' (Ware 1955:31). Confucians insisted on ritualism as a sign of a thorough-going, properly balanced society. Such a society needed ritualism which dealt with burial, mourning and sacrificial rites to the spirits of the departed. The funerary rites, which included the ancestral sacrificial rites, were seen by Confucians as necessary acts which served to assuage the grief of the mourners (Bodde 1981:321). Confucius was well ahead of his time in that he touched upon an important principle of 'death and dying' counselling procedure currently in vogue.

The aspect of performing rites for rites' sake should not be overlooked. The discipline of rites and the dignity which these ensure in any situation add a distinctive atmosphere to the quality of life. One can therefore speak of formalism or ritualism being an essential part of life.

For the Chinese traditionalist, ritual can be observed or complied with at two levels: the high level which involves the psychological reasons mentioned above, and the low level which the general public follows, that of offering obeisance to the

ancestors.

For the Chinese Protestant Christian, ritualism in church may accord well with the Biblical injunction to do all things decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40 KJV).

Confucius would not have agreed with the atheistic materialistic sentiments attributed to Lucretius (c.99-55 BC) the Roman poet and Epicurean philosopher. He nevertheless propounded the belief that man possesses the ability to improve his status in society by meeting the standards expected of a **chun tzu** (gentleman), a description which encapsulates the behaviour of the 'superior man' or the 'man of nobility'.

7.1.3.3 Similarities between Confucian and Christian morals and ethics

Unlike its European counterpart, Chinese humanism does not reject the existence of spirit beings, and neither by extension, the existence of or the need for any divine aid. The evidences of an intrinsic belief in a Supreme Being in the ancient Chinese Classics have been presented in works such as the ones by J Legge (1852) and W E Soothill (1951).

Chinese Christians do not find great difficulty in complying with the Biblical demands such as rendering to God and to Caesar their respective dues (Matthew 22:21 GNB, Mark 12:17 GNB, Luke 20:25 GNB), honouring the king (1 Peter 2:17 KJV) or the command that children should obey and honour their parents (Exodus 20:12 KJV, Ephesians 6:1-2 KJV). The injunctions to live at peace with all men (Romans 12:18 KJV), and to love one's fellow man as one loves oneself (Mark 12:31 GNB, Galatians 5:14 GNB) logically link up with the Christmas ideal as sung by the heavenly choir that peace should become earth's heritage and that goodwill should be shown by man to man (Luke 2:13 KJV).

One of the most composite documents which appears to sum up most if not all of these Biblical sentiments, is attributed to Confucius. It is known as the Li Yun or the Great Commonwealth and reads as follows:

> When the Great Principle (the ideal order that Confucius had in his mind) prevails, the world is like one home common to all; men of virtue and merit are to be elected to be rulers; sincerity and amity pervade all dealings between man and man; people shall love not only their own parents and own children, but also those of others; the aged, the young, the helpless widows and widowers, the orphans, the destitute, the incapacitated, and the sick shall be well provided for and well looked after, while the able-bodied shall exert themselves in their aid; men shall be appropriately employed and women suitably married; one detests that things are abandoned or wasted on earth, but, when gathered or stored up, they are not to be retained exclusively for oneself; one detests that exertion does not proceed from oneself, but its fruits are not to be regarded exclusively as one's own. Thus there will be no, and no cause for, conspiracy, robbery, theft, or rebellion, and no need to bolt one's outside door. This is a true Commonwealth. Confucius, Book of Li, Bk XXI, Title Li Yun, Ch.9.
>
> (Cheng 1973:8)

The traditional Chinese as well and his Christian counterpart seek to meet their moral and ethical obligations to their families and to society. The Christian has to take to heart the injunction in the Bible that he can perform 'all things' with the help of Christ who provides him with the strength (Philippians

4:13 KJV), the guidance of God's word (Psalm 119:105 TLB) and the spiritual motivation that all things should be done to God's glory (I Corinthians 10:31 TLB).

The Chinese humanist believes that the individual is capable of accomplishing this in his own strength and to the greater glory of his people.

It is possible that the Christian may be viewed by the traditional Chinese as being over dependent on spiritual help to live aspects of his life which he should be able to manage on his own.

Confucian humanism and Christianity are eminently successful in the provision of guidelines within the moulding process of the individual and of families. There is not much to choose between the two systems as far as morality and ethics are concerned. Christianity provides the spiritual dimension which is lacking in Confucianism.

The Chinese Christian is faced with the fact that Confucian humanism has not been successful in the history of his war-torn country over many centuries, in spite of the lofty ideals of the True Commonwealth as outlined above. Neither has Christianity over the past two millenia fared any better because peace on earth has seldom been experienced nor has much goodwill been in evidence anywhere in the world. The Christians themselves have difficulty in co-operative ventures and the lack of unity is exacerbated by the growing number of denominations. Serious rifts have become evident amongst the leaders of the older Christian communities themselves. The radicalism of Christ's teachings tend to be divisive on the human level (Matthew 10:34-39 GNB) but unifying on the spiritual level (John 3:16-17 GNB, Ephesians 4 GNB).

To what factors do Christian and traditional Chinese attribute

the failure of both approaches in the solving of communal and global strife?

The Christians place the blame on man's disobedience to God's command to repent of his sin while the Chinese blame man's unwillingness to learn the ways of the chun tzu and to practise the qualities of the true gentleman in his dealings within his community and with others further afield.

7.1.4 Eclecticism and Syncretism in Chinese religious concepts

7.1.4.1 Definitions of the terms

Eclecticism and syncretism are two terms which describe the processes whereby Chinese culture, and in particular Chinese religion, have developed.

Eclecticism may be defined as that method of procedure whereby a selection is made of the opinions and principles of various schools (NWED 1980:274).

Syncretism has been defined as the borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices of one religious tradition into another by a process of selection and reconciliation (Berling 1980:9). Syncretism may also be described as the attempt to join views which are irreconcilable.

The two terms appear to be very similar, but 'eclecticism' emphasises the method of choice, and 'syncretism' denotes the process of integration.

7.1.4.2 Current Taiwanese religious developments

These two aspects aptly describe Chinese religion and its development since the sixth century BC on the Chinese Mainland as

well as the present state of popular religious movements in the Republic of China on Taiwan.

The secularization of society in Taiwan has resulted in changes in religious patterns. Large numbers of the more pious have attempted to reaffirm their religious and moral traditions by forming new religious groups such as the **I Kuan Tao** (the Unity Sect) which has at least 300 000 members. This sect was legalised by the Government in 1987. Another popular group is the **T'ien Ti Chiao** (Religion of the Heavenly God) which has 10 000 members at present. It was founded as recently as 1986. The **Ju Tsung Shen Chiao,** (Confucian Spirit Religion) also boasts of a rapidly growing membership. These movements are representative of the new religious trend in the Republic of China (Chiu 1988:8).

7.1.4.3 The Chinese mindset

The mindset of Chinese people has always favoured the known, the tried and tested rather than that which is new and unknown. The Chinese race has generally been described as 'conservative' because of this characteristic. This description is however an oversimplification as without the spirit of adventure and the desire to experiment with new ideas, none of the great inventions of Chinese origin, such as gunpowder, the magnetic compass, paper or printing would have been possible. The sciences of acupuncture and herbal medication would have been unknown if the Chinese people were conservative to the extreme.

When one speaks of the conservative nature of the Chinese one does not imply that their minds are closed to new ideas, whether scientific, or religious, as the watershed adoption of Buddhism from India has shown. Other religious systems such as Islam and Christianity have also laid claim to the minds and hearts of many Chinese people. The only native Chinese religion which has continued to enjoy support is religious Taoism as distinct from philosophical Taoism. Such limited support is usually given in

tandem with Buddhism.

Syncretism and eclecticism were the causes of Taoism's growth and popularity since the introduction of Buddhism by Emperor Ming Ti in AD 65. The Chinese preferred the polytheistic Mahayana school of Buddhism, a feature which Taoism used to its own advantage as it integrated certain Buddhist features into its own system.

7.1.4.4 The influences of Buddhism on the cult of the ancestors

Of particular interest to the student of Chinese religion was the reinterpretation of the Buddhist tenet of 'non-atman', meaning 'non-soul', by the early Chinese disciples. This divergence from the Indian form of Buddhism drastically affected the development of Buddhism in China which in turn helped to mould the doctrines of eternal reward and punishment as well as aspects of the ancestor cult.

T'ang Yung-t'ung in his **Han Wei Liang-Chin Nan-Pei Ch'ao Fo-Chiao Shih** (History of Buddhism during the Han, Wei, Two Chin, Northern and Southern Dynasties), indicated that the Chinese had from the beginning 'failed to comprehend' the deep meaning of Buddhism as to the ultimate non-existence of the 'atman', meaning 'the soul'. Buddhism spoke about the endless cycle of transmigration, a doctrine which the Chinese reinterpreted to mean that the soul does not perish but continues to survive through countless existences as a result of 'karma'. This interpretation became the current belief among the Chinese (cited by Bodde 1981:325-326).

It is important to note that certain aspects of the ancestor cult of the Chinese and the apparent confusion of the Taoists and the Buddhist concepts of Paradise and Hell can therefore be traced to this early doctrinal misinterpretation on the part of the Chinese.

7.1.4.5 The influences of Taoism on the ancestor cult

It was however from Buddhism that Taoism borrowed the belief in transmigration, thereby adding a fascinating vista to, and making a tremendous impact on the popular Chinese animistic beliefs. The traditional gods of China and a host of younger deities were integrated into the Taoist pantheon. Ancient folklore was aided by more modern fiction to create heroes of fantastic legends out of such deities (Cave 1933:160).

Taoism was originally a sophisticated sixth century BC philosophy which competed with Confucianism especially since the fourth and third centuries BC. In later centuries it assimilated the animistic elements of peasant religious beliefs with demonology, magic and exorcism developing alongside its extensive pantheon. Taoism as well as Neo-Confucianism emphasise the well known Yin-Yang categorisation of life.

The Yin and the Yang are conceived of as 'two mutually complimentary principles or forces' (Fung 1953;2:7) and it has been an intrinsic aspect of Chinese philosophy since the Warring States period (403-221 BC) when it was incorporated into the School of Cosmology.

The Yin-Yang concept is an attempt to explain the nature and mechanism of the cosmos and at the other extreme, the fine balance of the two elements within the human body. Sickness is therefore seen as the result of an imbalance of these two 'energy modes' in the body. Chinese herbal medication as well as acupuncture are both based on the principle of restoring the balance between the Yin and the Yang elements in the body in order to bring about healing.

In Chinese religion, the Yin soul enters the grave where it ultimately dies, and the Yang soul goes to heaven, where it is either reborn or enters the Taoist Paradise.

7.1.4.6 Christianity, eclecticism and syncretism

The idea of introducing a syncretistic or an eclectic Christianity in a host society is somewhat of an anathema to Evangelicals. For example, the contention of the majority of Chinese Protestants in Johannesburg is that Chinese cultic practices should have no place in the Christian form of worship. This sentiment was expressed in the answers given to certain questions which touched upon this topic (QQ 21,22,23).

The Bible itself is a product of the Jewish Old Testament and the teachings of the early church. The teachings of Christ often contradicted the traditional Jewish guidelines for faith and conduct in the pre-Christian era. Perhaps the most striking example is to be found in the Old Testament, especially where Moses laid down the law of recompense: Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe (Exodus 21:24-25 KJV). In the New Testament, Christ taught the direct antithesis to the Mosaic law of recompense: '...Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also... Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you' (Matthew 5:39,44 KJV).

Although Christ was a product of the Jewish nation, born within its ethnic limitations and reared within its religious institutions, He also had to choose which elements of Judaism should be retained and which aspects should have no part in the new faith He was proclaiming. Certain religious rites such as the Passover feast He imbued with a totally new, yet still historically related application to the salvation history of the Jews (1 Corinthians 11:24-25 KJV). Baptism was another rite which was adopted and given a deeper meaning in the Christian church (Romans 6 KJV) compared with the rite of repentence which John the Baptist administered (Matthew 3:1-8 KJV).

Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles made use of 'heathen' poetry to illustrate a point in his preaching of the gospel to the Atheneans on Mars' hill (Acts 17:22-32 KJV). John, the disciple 'whom Jesus loved', used the Greek concept of the Logos in describing the eternal Word and incarnate Christ (John 1:1-15 KJV). These are a few Biblical examples which illustrate the problems involved in conceptual perceptions in the discussion of continuity and discontinuity.

With such examples from the Bible itself, it may be a fruitful exercise for the Chinese Christian to reconsider the very rich cultural contributions his people have made to the countries which fell within its historical spheres of influence such as Japan, Vietnam, and Korea. Perhaps certain aspects of its ancient culture could be adapted and be used in his modern Christian church to help enrich the developing church culture. The well-developed teachings concerning filial piety should perhaps be re-examined in the light of the Christian faith.

The Church has made extensive use of extra-Biblical and non-Christian sources in its development. The use of Greek concepts is a prime example.

The writings of the Greek scholar and philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) were rediscovered by the medieval Church theologians. Their concerted efforts to reconcile orthodox Christianity with Aristotle's teachings gave rise to the Scholastic movement during the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Aristotle's views have influenced the Christian concept of philosophy, morality and ethics as well as metaphysics and the natural sciences.

The most notable and influential Schoolman was Thomas Aquinas (c.1226-1274) whose chief work Summa Theologica still constitutes the only authoritative philosophy followed by the Roman Catholic Church (Pike 1951:342).

The adoption or the retention of non-Biblical cultural traits which do not detract from the essential truth of the Gospel should not be seen as a departure from the Christian faith. These are separate issues and the Christian gospel must not be interpreted as a culture. It transcends all cultures and as a catalyst, acts like the Biblical 'leaven' to bring about transformation in the life of the individual. Theoretically its influence should spread into the family and ultimately into the global community.

7.1.4.7 Towards a sinicised Christianity

Judicious adoption and adaptation of ideas from Chinese culture which do not conflict with New Testament principles can result in a Christianity more readily understood by the Chinese people. The contents of the Bible may be Middle Eastern in terms of a specific set of geo-historico-cultural expressions; its message however, needs to be presented in such a way that it will appeal to the world at large.

The process of indigenization is not unknown in the translation of the Bible into languages far removed from the Judaeo-Christian traditions. There is therefore a need to differentiate between the Scriptures themselves as being the revelation of God Himself to mankind, and our theology or understanding of them (Hiebert 1981:378).

There is no need to copy the structures of Western Christianity without careful examination of its weakenesses and its many strengths. In fact, many of the practices allowed in Western Christianity have their origins in pre-Christian European culture: Christmas and Easter with their numerous extra-Biblical ancillary activities are but two such examples.

It is possible to develop a distinctive Chinese church culture

but not necessarily to the exclusion of non-Chinese characteristics. Third World churches need not be blinded by the past political or cultural imperialism which many missionaries of the twentieth century unconsciously practised. In other words, the Holy Spirit has been at work during the past two millenia refining the Church and using the Western nations to evangelize the world. The Holy Spirit has worked in and through nations in spite of their weaknesses much in the same way that He continues to work within the lives of the individual believers today.

7.1.5 Indigenization and contextualization in cross-cultural ministries

7.1.5.1 Examples of indigenization in China

The term 'indigenization' refers to the adaptive process whereby the presentation of the gospel takes on the native character of the host community. When Ricci dressed in the Chinese scholarly garb and men such as Soothill and Legge mastered the Confucian Classics in order to reach the elite of China, they were involved in such a process. The Three Self Movement which has been the officially recognized Chinese Protestant organization in Communist China is such an attempt to indigenize Christianity in terms of being self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing.

7.1.5.2 The differences between indigenization and contextualization

The first use of the term 'contextualization' in 1972 is attributed to Shoki Coe and Abaron Sapsezian, directors of the Theological Education Fund who suggested that 'contextualization' implies all that is involved in the familiar term 'indigenization', but seeks to press beyond it to take into account 'the process of secularity, technology and the struggle for human justice which characterized the historical moment of

nations in the Third World' (Nicholls 1979:21).

Contextualization therefore calls upon the church to take into account the political, social and technical problems. One of the dangers facing missionaries involved in cross-cultural ministries is to become over-involved in these matters to the minimization or even total exclusion of the task of evangelism. Renewed emphasis on the need for evangelism was made at the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne.

The process of contextualization is riddled with pitfalls for the Christian. He must be aware of the differences between cultural and dogmatic contextualization, noting that one can speak of two levels of culture: namely, the institutions of family, law, education and the observable level of cultural behaviour as well as the use of artifacts. The deeper levels of culture include the world view and cosmology, and the moral and ethical values derived from them. The Christian must likewise be aware that existential contextualization operates on two basic principles: the essential relativity of text and context, and the dialectical method of the search for truth. Thus it may be said that all theology is culturally conditioned and therefore in some sense relative (Nicholls 1979:24-25).

The need to indigenize the gospel and its presentation remain a priority; yet at the same time the process of contextualization must be carried out but not to the extent of losing or down-playing the evangelical task of the church. There is still the need to evaluate the problems of culture on all levels as the task of judicious <u>syncretising</u> continues under the guidance of the sovereign Lord of the Church.

Nicholls (1979:29) aptly noted that an unhealthy phobia of syncretism can cripple true indigenization and contextualization.

7.1.6 Bowing as a form of showing respect

7.1.6.1 Political and cultural conflicts in the kowtow

Different cultures sanction the show of respect in different ways. When England sent Lord Amherst to China in 1816 to negotiate trade-related matters between the two countries, he refused to perform the kowtow to the Chinese Emperor and was immediately sent back to England (Li 1978:389). The kowtow consisted of kneeling and touching the forehead to the ground and it was a ritual performed by an inferior to a superior to show deep respect or homage. A Chinese person thought it quite natural to perform this ritual to his parents or his Emperor and consquently the refusal of the English envoy to perform the kowtow was considered the height of bad manners and arrogance. An American envoy to China in 1859 John E Ward indicated that he would only kowtow 'before God and women' (Li 1978:390).

It is possible that these gentlemen were not prepared to show this form of respect to a foreign sovereign.

7.1.6.2 The Bible and bowing

The Bible forbids the 'bowing down' to any 'graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath...' (Exodus 20:4-5 KJV). This command must be read in the context of the Jewish exodus and the idolatrous worship which awaited them en route to the Promised Land where much idolatrous worship also existed.

Bowing itself was an acceptable practice in Biblical times. Jacob and his family 'bowed down' to Esau (Genesis 33:3,6 GNB); Joseph's brothers 'bowed down' to him (Genesis 43:26 GNB); David bowed to King Saul (1 Samuel 24:8 GNB), to quote a few of the many references to bowing in the Old Testament. When the women visited the tomb on the first day of the week, they 'bowed down

to the ground' in fear when they were confronted by 'two men in bright shining clothes' (Luke 24:5 GNB).

7.1.6.3 Chinese culture and bowing

The failure to distinguish between bowing to an image in worship and bowing to someone, whether dead or alive, out of respect, has prompted one Chinese Protestant church leader to advise that the Christian should stand in front of the casket but should not bow to the deceased, even if it is a relative, 'as many Chinese still view bowing at funerals as worship' (Interview Mr V Lun: 13.3.1989). This particular advice appears to have been based on the informant's two assumptions, namely, that the ancestors are truly worshipped and not merely venerated, and secondly, that such worship is synonymous with idolatry.

The Chinese greet each other with a nod of the head in an informal situation but a bow is more indicative of respect: the deeper the bow, the greater the respect. It was for this reason that the kowtow was reserved especially for the Emperor although it was also occasionally performed to parents.

The display of respect is therefore accomplished in different ways by different peoples. The Chinese teach that the 'gentleman' may possess all the necessary qualities of his status, such as inner integrity, loyalty, humanism, altruism, the social graces, culture and righteousness; but these qualities are useless if he fails to practise them by showing respect to others, the most common form being the traditional Chinese bow of respect.

7.1.7 The symbiotic relationship between Chinese culture and the Three Teachings

In the field of biological studies, the process of symbiosis may be described as two different organisms attached to each other for their mutual benefit. The Three Teachings of Confucianism,

Taoism and Buddhism constitute the major constituents of Chinese culture and provide the latter with norms and values in the form of guidelines for ethics and morality.

7.1.7.1 The relationship between Chinese culture and religion

The purpose of this part of the study is to demonstrate that when one discourses on Chinese culture one is in actual fact speaking about the development and the influences of religion on the whole of China. Religion has been so interwoven into the very texture of life in China that no credal formula was necessary to evaluate the religious affinity or lack thereof amongst them. In the West much is made of one's belonging to a particular religion and more specifically which branch and sub-branch down to the local parish and congregation. In China no special term for religion per se was in use among the Chinese until recent times when tsung chiao was coined to match the Western term. It was for these reasons that Thompson (1969:1) wrote 'The character of religious expression in China is above all else a manifestation of the Chinese culture'.

In going one step further, Bodde (1981:132) observed that it was ethics, and especially Confucian ethics and not religion that has provided the spiritual basis of Chinese civilization.

The Three Teachings supplemented each other very well. Buddhism filled the spiritual vacuum which neither Confucianism nor Taoism could fill. It provided a moral continuum which linked the present life with the afterlife, a characteristic which neither of the other two teachings could provide. The highly ethical teachings of Buddhism on love and compassion contrasted with the selfish motivations of Taoistic rites in their attempt to prolong life. The Confucian principle of **jen** (human kindness) found a corresponding heartbeat in the teachings of Buddha's Eightfold Path of right views, thought, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, mind control and meditation.

7.1.7.2 The role of the Three Teachings in Chinese culture

To what extent is Chinese culture dependent on the influences of the Three Teachings? Perhaps the question is best answered from a negative approach.

Not much remains of modern Chinese culture without the Three Teachings and their influences on the Chinese nation. If one should remove the humanistic teachings of Confucius with its considerable body of teaching on the principles of interpersonal relationships, and excise the modern emphasis of filial piety with its attendent ancestral rites, comparatively little will be left of the essence of Chinese culture as it has been known for about two and a half millenia.

The Taoists were originally responsible for the establishment of the study of natural sciences in their attempts to find the elixir of life. The experiments which were incurred led to the writing of tomes on the role of herbs and also the various uses of chemicals. The acupunture system of healing was also a result of the Taoist search after health and longevity.

The philosophical content of ancient Taoist thought has continued to interest many present day Chinese and non-Chinese who find the paradoxical expressions in the **Tao te Ching** (Classic of the Way) one approach to interpreting life. The concept of the Yin and Yang elements as applied to nature also finds a responsiveness in modern thinking as a useful model whereby the cosmos and the creature seem to find a satisfactory niche in the scheme of things (vide: Watts 1979:37-122).

What too, of the many religious rites and institutions on which the Chinese have come to depend for their spiritual sustenance over a period of almost two thousand years? The Burning of Clothes, the Feeding of the hungry spirits, are two of the most

important Chinese cultic festivals and they too are of Buddhist origin. The belief in the ten courts of hell and the eighteen hells as well as the belief in the reincarnation of souls were also developed by Chinese Buddhists. While one may not agree with the Chinese eschatology or the ancestor cult, they are nevertheless admirable for their sheer immensity of influence.

It would be hard to argue the point that without the Three Teachings Chinese culture would not have reached its present stage.

7.1.7.3 The pre-sixth century Chinese culture

However, the basic culture of the Chinese which preceded the birth of Confucius, of Lao Tzu and also of Buddha by at least a millenium and more, was not without its own merits. It had provided a settled community with a political and governmental structure comparatively more advanced than many other systems in the ancient world. Furthermore a language with an advanced script had been in use for a considerable period of time so that even Confucius could consult ancient 'books' manufactured out of split bamboo segments and tied together with silk. The Chinese technological skills had enabled them to produce silk from the cacoons of the silk worms, use crockery and eating utensils, some of which have been discovered in archaeological excavations.

In terms of ideologies, Confucius developed concepts such as the five cardinal relationships, the principles of jen and chun tzu which he came across in his studies of the 'ancient' Chou dynasty. The material he studied was advanced for him and a work such as the I Ching or the Book of Changes which helps to interpret omens, he considered as worthy of many years of study. The various sacrificial rites were already well established by the time Confucius was born in the sixth century BC. He simply recommended that they should be observed, not necessarily for religious purposes but for the sake of the rites themselves, to

establish discipline and to maintain propriety.

As much as the cultural development of China benefitted from the influences of the Three Teachings it is correspondingly as important to acknowledge the role the existent cultural infrastructure played in being a channel for the transmission of those enriching ideological and religious concepts.

The symbiotic relationship between Chinese culture and the Three Teachings over the many centuries has resulted in an enriching, useful and continuing development of both.

All funerary practices contain elements which are subject to cultural and religious determinants. Some of these will be examined in the following section.

7.2 CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN FUNERARY PRACTICES

In the previous section a number of perceptions related to concepts of the Chinese traditionalist and the Chinese Christian were examined. This section of the study will examine selected funerary practices which lead to the closing arguments in favour of the thesis.

7.2.1 Symbols of sympathy and bereavement

7.2.1.1 White and red funerary packets

The Cantonese in Johannesburg continue to observe the custom of distributing a white packet containing a 5c coin to each mourner who enters the chapel or hall. After the ceremony at the cemetery a red packet also with a 5c coin is given to each mourner. In a survey of attitudes on this subject (Q38A) the majority of Chinese Protestants (47%) were in favour of this custom as it showed sympathy towards the bereaved family. Twenty eight percent of the respondents disagreed that Christians should accept the

white and red packets.

It appears that the underlying reason for this support of the use of the packets is their usefulness as convenient symbols of sympathy and gratitude. The white packet symbolises the readiness of the visitor to be associated with the bereaved family by his acceptance of it. The red packet serves as a symbol of gratitude to the person for his presence at the funeral and also as a means of restoring good fortune or luck to the mourner, who in attending the funeral, had exposed himself to bad luck and misfortune, elements with which death is associated.

7.2.1.2 Indications of bereavement

Traditionally all relatives of the deceased must wear a coarse calico-type of gown usually worn over clothes in drab colours as bright colours are considered frivilous and out of keeping with the sorrowful occasion. The closest relatives must wear sackcloth. These requirements are not observed in Johannesburg although the wearing of black or white are accepted as mourning colours.

Amongst Chinese people in Johannesburg the wearing of a black tie shows that a person is in mourning for a parent. The wearing of a black armband in addition to the black tie was obligatory three decades ago but it is no longer strictly observed. Some males will wear a black button in their lapel to show that they are in mourning. Women usually wear some item in black, not counting black shoes, to show that they are in mourning.

7.2.1.3 The period of mourning observed for parents

It is usual for families to be in mourning for one hundred days for a parent. On the hundredth day the mourning clothes are either burnt or more often nowadays given away. In some homes no television is allowed, no parties are attended, or any public

places of entertainment visited. With some families it is considered bad manners and highly insensitive to visit relatives or friends when one is in mourning. Visitors to the bereaved family are always welcome but no further red packets are distributed subsequent to the funeral ceremony.

7.2.2 The burial of the dead

7.2.2.1 'Let the dead bury their dead'

Some Chinese Protestants responded rather harshly to a survey question which asked how Christians can show respect to the ancestors (Q43). In a few responses, the words of Christ were quoted 'let the dead bury their dead' (Matthew 8:22 KJV). This injunction furnished these respondents with the Biblical reason for not attending funerals (ch 6.6.3.3). This particular 'evangelical' interpretation of the words of Christ is not only lacking in proper hermeneutical principles but is also very impractical to say the least. Being a Christian does not mean that one should not show sorrow or not be sympathetic to those who find themselves in bereavement. Even Christ wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus (John 11:35 KJV).

7.2.2.2 At the graveside

At Chinese funerals in Johannesburg the mourners will always have the courtesy to stay until the grave had been filled in, the nameboard properly placed and the floral tributes neatly put on the heaped grave. If the ceremony had been conducted by a Christian minister or layman, the closing prayers will have been offered and the officient accompanying the bereaved family to their cars before joining them for a cup of tea at their home.

If the funeral had not been a Christian one, the most senior male member of the deceased's family, either the eldest son, a brother, uncle or some other respected male member of the clan,

will commence with the burning of joss sticks and mock paper money. As this part of the burial ceremony is considered 'private' most mourners will leave the bereaved family to continue their rites. Some mourners may stay out of interest. The burning of the mock paper money is an attempt to transfer by immolatory means some of the necessities for the use of the deceased's spirit in the netherworld.

In a non-Christian burial ceremony no words are spoken by anyone at the graveside. As soon as the mourners had all parked their cars and had made their way to the open grave, either the eldest son in the family or the most senior male member in the family or male relative will indicate to the undertakers to let the casket down. The casket must be level and symmetrically positioned at the bottom of the grave otherwise, it is believed, the dead may not rest well.

7.2.2.3 The cockerel in Chinese burial rites

An informant (Interview Mrs IBM Brown: 9.3.1989) said that up to about 1970 at the Newclare cemetery, she used to witness at funerals for very old people a cockerel's neck being slightly cut and the blood allowed to drip onto the coffin. The cock was then allowed to run or fly away. When asked why this rite was observed she said that the rite had a two-fold purpose: the cockerel's escape served to clear the way for the soul of the deceased to go on his way to his ancestors and secondly to allow any evil spirits which might be in the corpse to be transferred to the cockerel.

The Johannesburg Chinese Community has not used cockerels in funerary rites for almost two decades or more.

The parallel of the Chinese cockerel and that of the goat which was to carry the sins of the people into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:20-22 KJV) is a subject worth further research, as

is the ancillary reference to the goat used as a sin offering (Leviticus 4:24-26 KJV).

According to Whiting (1983:216) at the final service of remembrance on the forty-ninth day of death, a priest will use a drop of blood from a cockscomb and dot the Chinese character **wang** (prince), an honorary title on the deceased's grave identifier. This additional dot changes wang to **chu** (lord), 'so changing the deceased from mortal into immortal'. For an alternate set of terms used on the ancestral tablet, see Liao (1972:126).

The writer suggests that convenience and pragmatism are two underlying reasons for the use of a cockerel and the cockscomb. It is pragmatic to use the cockerel because it could be caught and be slaughtered for the table should it be in danger of bleeding to death. The use of a drop of blood from the cockscomb posed no danger to the cock and the wound heals within a matter of hours. The convenience of using poultry in these rites lay in their availability and reasonable affordability.

The religious reasons for the use of the cockerel is associated with the bird's link with the sun. Both the sun and the cockerel's blood are classified as Yang elements. The cockerel's blood is a useful aid to ensure a 'good effect' or to set at rest a dying man's 'mind and manes'.

The assistant to the person who performs the dotting of the ancestor tablet is usually awarded the 'booty' of the cockerel. For fuller details of the traditional rites, see J J M de Groot (1972;1:216-218).

The researcher has not encountered any evidence of the dotting of the tablet in Johannesburg. It is most unlikely that this practice is still observed as portraits of the deceased have replaced the traditional ancestor tablets.

7.2.2.4 The non-concurrence of death-time and burial-language

In both the Chinese traditional funeral ceremony and the Chinese Protestant funeral service, the element of death-time and burial-language do not concur. In the case of the Christian burial services, the language used seems to indicate that the soul of the deceased is to take leave of the living and indeed of its mortal remains only at the service. The first example comes from the Anglican Church Book of Common Prayer Order of the Burial of the dead (1961:481) in which the following prayer appears: 'We humbly commend the soul of this thy servant... into thy hands. Wash it, we pray thee,... that whatsoever defilements it may have contracted in this world... being purged and done away, it may be presented pure and without spot before thee...'. The other example appears in a prayer in the Order for the Burial of a Child in a Baptist Handbook of Services: 'O Lord Jesus Christ... we beseech thee, that we may know that thou hast now taken this child into the arms of thy love...' (Payne & Winward 1972:213).

Protestants generally believe that the soul of the individual Christian goes to be with Christ at the moment of death, according to Paul's statement, '...to be absent from the body... (to) be present with the Lord' (2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV). It was his desire to magnify Christ in his body, whether 'by life or by death'. Death was viewed not as a loss but as a 'gain' (Philippians 1:20-21 KJV).

The current Chinese traditional burning of articles at the graveside and in particular the burning of the candle-joss stick which is used to lead home the soul from the grave, also suffers from a non-concurrence as far as death-time and burial-language are concerned. The soul, if it is unfettered in its movements, does not need to be carted back and forth: first from its deathbed to the mortuary, from there to the funeral parlour and then to the grave, only to be led back to its original home to which it could have gone without any help from the living.

Thus, while the Christian format of the funeral service operates within a particular framework, that of the traditional Chinese ceremony also operates on a particular framework, which in certain respects is also very systematic and very thorough in its approach, given the spiritual milieu in which it operates.

7.2.2.5 The burning of funerary articles

The importance of the written word on either paper or silk has always been highly regarded by the Chinese. Soon after the art of manufacturing paper was discovered in approximately AD 100, it was the custom in China to take any paper found in the streets to a temple to be burnt. This custom not only confirms the ancient practice of sacrifices by immolatory means but it may also help explain in part the belief that any document burnt will result in the transfer of that message to the spirit world. The relationship between fire and the transfer of the sacrificial items to the realm of the spirits in Chinese cultic practices deserves further research.

The burning of joss sticks by the Chinese is to provide incense as food for the souls of the ancestors as well as for the deities. In the Old Testament the requirement of incense in the worship of God was clearly enunciated (Exodus 30:7 KJV, Leviticus 16:13 KJV). The difference between the Chinese and the Old Testament practices lies in the symbolism: the former represents food and the latter prayer.

7.2.2.6 The element of light in religion

Light for devotional purposes, whether by oil, candles or by electrical means, is also a feature common to many religions. The use of 'electrical candles' or special ritual electrically generated 'flames' may be found on ancestor shelves in some Chinese homes, in Buddhist temples, in Jewish synagogues to

commemmorate the dead, and on altars in Christian churches to add to the symbolism of light in their worship. Such a common use of light points to an inter-religious practice found in Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism, to name but a few religions.

The presence of the basic Judaeo-Christian religious elements such as prayer, forgiveness, candles, incense and ritual are also found in traditional Chinese funerals. This commonality factor introduces a dilemma of interpretation: do the Chinese actually worship their ancestors or do they simply remember them?
In either case, it is filial piety which bridges the worlds of the living and the dead.

7.2.3 Filial piety and its continuation after death

7.2.3.1 Filiality not a Chinese monopoly

The Chinese are not the only people who practise filiality. The Jews also possess a theologically-based institution of filiality. The 'first commandment with promise' (Ephesians 6:2-3 KJV) in the Decalogue related to the commandment to honour one's parents (Exodus 20:12 KJV). It is of particular interest to note that it heads the second section of the Decalogue which deals with the interpersonal relationships.

7.2.3.2 Filiality a primary cultural institution

Filial piety is the primary Chinese institution whereby respect is shown to one's parents. The following Confucian analect illustrates the absolute necessity to provide support for one's parents. Confucius was reported on one occasion to have criticised the view that it was sufficient to provide the basic needs such as food and shelter for parents. He argued that a man even provides food and shelter for his dogs and horses! 'If a man does not show respect for his parents how is he differentiating between them and the animals?' (Ware 1955:26).

The sense of indebtedness which the descendant feels towards his parents continues beyond the grave and when practised to the extreme, can turn indebtedness into worship.

This system is so deeply entrenched in the collective psyche of the Chinese people that its practice extends beyond this life into the next as far as offerings and remembrance rites are concerned. Confucius replied to a question on filial duty towards parents: '...While the parents live, serve them according to the rites. When they die, bury them according to the rites and make the offerings to them according to the rites' (Ware 1955:26). Traditional Chinese customs therefore require the observance of certain rites after the death of the parents.

7.2.3.3 Conflicts and comparisons

Should conversion to Christianity automatically reject some or all such customary rites?

It is understandable that Christians reject any semblance of prayers being offered to the deceased or the burning of joss sticks as food for the spirits or the transfer of funds by burning mock money to be used in the netherworld. When food is offered to the deceased, it does seem to the Christian that the ancestors are expected to eat the food.

The question also arises whether the Christian should be discouraged from attending a simple and a non-religious communal rite such as distributing flowers on the graves. Does a conflict of religious interest arise when the Christian meets with members of the same clan afterwards to enjoy a meal which nowadays harbours no religious implications?

A civic wreath-laying ceremony in remembrance of the war dead does not differ in intent or purpose from a community or family

visit to the cemetery to distribute flowers on the graves.

7.2.3.4 Changes in some cultic festivals

The Ch'ing Ming festival during which Hung Cheng is observed, is no longer a religious or cultic occasion in Johannesburg. There is nothing festive about it nor are there any religious inuendos involved. The South African observance of the 'Sweeping of the Graves ritual' has lost its Chinese cultic meaning and its purpose. It is purely an opportunity to visit the graves of deceased family and friends and to place some flowers on their graves. The September Burning of Clothes festival is also a non-festival as no clothing is burnt at the grave and no offerings made of whatever kind. Should individual families wish to perform the cultic rites, it is all done at home. In reality the ancestral rites which are publicly observed in China and in some parts of the Far East are no longer practised in Johannesburg.

The mindset of some of the traditionalist Chinese does not equate the offering of food and libation as an act of worship even if they should believe that their ancestors are able to partake of that food. The Christian is prone to interpret this latter belief in a judgemental manner and conclude that ancestors are being worshipped.

The Jews were commanded to make various types of offerings and sacrifices to God (Leviticus 1-7 GNB).
But should one think of God in the Old Testament eating the offerings of the countless bulls and goats and birds which the Jews burnt regularly in their sacrifices? The Bible itself provides a definite 'NO' to this question (Psalm 50:7-14 GNB).

7.2.3.5 Christianity and the spirits of the deceased faithful

The belief that the spirits of the ancestors do not die is no different from the Christian belief that men's souls live

forever. The locality of the deceased souls even in the Bible is very indistinct. This has resulted in the Roman Catholic Church believing in a Purgatory and even in a limbo for unbaptized infants, imbeciles and idiots (Pike 1951:232; Boettner 1962:247).

The author of the letter to the Hebrews encouraged the Christians by reminding them of the very many faithful believers who had preceded them (Hebrews 11 KJV) and who were likened to the vast crowd in an arena witnessing the running of the race of life. The Christians were therefore 'compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses' (Hebrews 12:1 KJV). Although the Bible does not enlarge or comment further on this verse, the question needs to be posed whether the souls of the departed are indeed able to enter into a passive communion with the living? (Poole 1968;3:868, Barclay 1977:172).

The Christian festival, All Souls Day, has been observed on November 2 since the third century in commemoration and for the eternal repose of the souls of the departed faithful. Apart from the prayers offered for their souls, prayers are also directed for help to the souls of those who had been canonized as saints by the Roman Catholic Church. This aspect of Christianity does not appear to differ from the ancestral cult practised by the traditionalist Chinese. Protestants reject such beliefs as much as they reject many Chinese rites. The Chinese convert is therefore faced with certain 'Christian' practices which so nearly resemble his own pre-Christian experiences. Should he feel at home in such an environment?

7.2.4 The ancestral cult: worship or the show of respect and remembrance

The crux of the ancestral cult lies in the question whether the ancestors are the recipients of worship or whether they receive the sacrifices as memorial acts with no implied religious overtones.

7.2.4.1 The arguments in favour of worship

It appears to the writer that the parallel question to the first is whether the idea of worship should be interpreted universally in the same way so that one definition of worship is applicable to all cultures. Boettner (1962:198) furnishes such an example in the statement: 'We must insist that any religious worship, whether inward or outward, consisting of prayer, or praise, and expressed by outward homage such as bowing, kneeling, or prostration, is properly termed worship and belongs to God alone'.

At the heart of this conflict lies the question:
Has the actual worship of ancestors become a substitute religion? This question presupposes that in order for a cultural practice to be accepted or be interpreted as a 'religion', certain elements need to be present and certain conditions must be met. Smart (1972:16-27,44) listed six elements of worship. The Object of worship is the 'Focus' to Smart.

1. Worship is a relational activity. One cannot worship oneself.
2. Worship expresses superiority of the Focus to the worshippers.
3. The ritual performatively sustains or is part of the power of the Focus.
4. The experience which worship expresses is that of numinous, and the object worshipped is perceived as awe-inspiring.
5. The Focus of worship is invisible.
6. The superiority of the Focus gives it greater power than the worshipper.

Smart's third element invites a negative comment as it appears to contradict the second and the sixth. The superior being should not need the ritual performance of the worshipper to sustain it.

While this observation is true of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, it is not the case in many other religions.

The fifth element of worship does not take into account Emperor worship as it was practised in Japan until General D. Mac Arthur forbade it during the American occupation (1945-1951).

Smart does not apply the fourth and sixth elements to the cult of the ancestors. In the case of the Chinese, no sense of awe is experienced in the observance of the cultic rites, nor is the Focus, in this instance the ancestors, considered as possessing greater power than the worshipper. Freedman (1966:118-154) presented some useful insights into the relationship of power and dependence between ancestor and descendant.

Ancestor worship contains elements which are similar or which closely parallels the practices found in other religions.

The sacrificial element, for example forms an intrinsic aspect of ancestor worship. The devotees sincerely believe that by offering food and drink, the ancestors do actually partake of it. The offerings of grave money and paper clothes by immolatory means, also serve as acts of piety as special needs of the spirits are met in that way.

Devotion is another important element of worship. In ancestor worship the 'ancestor shelf' is of utmost importance. The burning of joss sticks on a daily basis and the bows which are made to the spirits which indwell the spirit tablets, are acts which indicate the measure of devotion to the ancestors.

The third element of the worship of ancestors touches upon the nature of the ancestral spirits. They are not omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; neither do they minister to the whole of mankind but are only involved with the immediate family and to a lesser extent, the clan. They are not self-sufficient, but are

entirely dependent on their offsprings to provide them with sustenance, housing, clothes and money. They are a distinct class of spirit beings and are not related to the other worshipped beings in the Chinese pantheon. The extensive Chinese pantheon includes a bureaucratic order of spirits and gods whose status is modeled along the lines of the traditional Chinese bureaucracy.

The fact that the Chinese have practised ancestor worship for at least three millenia, conclusively shows that it has and continues to meet a spiritual need. The strong Confucian emphasis in Chinese culture on the importance of the family is given a logical and religiously-orientated mechanism for its continuance even after death. The hope that one's progeny will faithfully carry out the traditonal ritual responsibilities to maintain one's soul in the hereafter instills a measure of spiritual peace in the individual. For Christians this 'hope' and 'need' falls away because his eternal state is not dependent on the observance of rituals by his progeny.

Religions usually require the services of a priestly caste or leaders responsible for the execution of the requisite rites. In the case of ancestor worship, each head of the home assumes the role of a ritual leader. This state of affairs is ideal because in ancestor worship only the descendants may worship the family's ancestors. In theory each home constitutes an ancestor worship venue with a resident 'priest'.

Comparisons may also be made between ancestor worship and other major religions in terms of the expectations of the devotees. The Jews for example were taught (2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV) that if they humbled themselves, prayed and sought God's face and turned from their evil ways, only then would God hear from heaven, forgive their sins and heal their land. The fulfilment of certain religious obligations on the part of the devotees was to result in God responding to them.

By feeding, housing and clothing the ancestors and by showing them that they are still part of the family, the descendants not only fulfil their filial duties but also hope for the good fortune and success which their ancestors may bring them.

Thus the expectation to be 'blessed' in a reciprocal relationship between the deceased and the living in the Chinese ancestral cult does not appear to be different from the religious expectations found in some major religions when devotees expect blessings when certain religious obligations have been met.

Not all the conditions which Smart laid down are applicable to ancestor worship. According to Smart's conditions, ancestor worship should not be considered as a religion. There is little doubt however, that the practice of the cult has become a substitute religion to many millions of Chinese people.

The Chinese Protestant is faced with a number of evangelical views relating to culture and religious practices. The following two views may find wide acceptance amongst Protestants.

The Lausanne Covenant adopted a strong evangelical statement on culture which reflects on ancestor rites.

> Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he has fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic.
>
> (Douglas 1975:6)

A similar perspective of culture and Christianity is provided by Kraft (1979:113) who aligns himself with the general 'God-above-culture' view. God is seen as transcendent and absolute, completely beyond and outside culture. To Kraft cultural structuring is a vehicle or milieu, neutral in essence but warped

by the pervasive influence of human sinfulness. Culture is neither an enemy nor a friend to God or man. It is an entity that exists and is used by God, Satan and man. Culture is the milieu in which all human encounters and maturation occur. The human psyche is structured by culture as is every expression of 'groupness', including family, community and church.

The Chinese Christian finds himself caught up in family and community rituals which may affect his church-life.

The nature of ritual acts is dependent on one of two factors. For example, the family may attempt to maintain the filial relationship with a deceased parent by the burning of joss sticks and the offering of sacrifices. On the other hand the family may observe traditional rites devoid of all religious implications. In the second of the two factors, the need to maintain a relationship is not a matter of any importance, as the rite is observed as a non-religious cultural tradition.

When such rites are to serve as a means of reaffirming and strengthening a relationship between the living and the dead, then certain religiously orientated motives of worship present themselves for consideration. One needs to ask why the offsprings need to maintain that type of relationship between the dead and themselves. Perhaps the answer lies in an almost universal fear of the dead and what the spirits of the dead might do to them if certain rites are not observed. Tan (1979:11) speaks of fear of retribution from the dead, fear of ill-luck and fear of calamity if the offsprings do not do what is demanded of them.

Another reason for maintaining the relationship with the deceased may be the desire for Feng-Shui or good fortune which is derived from the ancestors. The granting of such good fortune is dependent on what the offsprings do for the ancestors. The siting of the grave must be correct to allow the transfer of the good flow of 'wind and water' to the descendants; the ancestors must

be honoured in the observance of regular rites which include the burning of joss sticks, clothes and mock money, the offering of food and drinks not only on the special ritual festivals but also on other family-related festive occasions.

During an interview with one of the writer's informers (Mr KC:18.3.1989) the interviewee conceded that some people who practise the ancestor cult do ask certain things of their ancestors although he denied ever doing so himself. From the writer's own observations it is fairly common for the cultists to ask for protection and blessings for the family in general terms when lighting the joss sticks. A certain measure of bargaining is practised in the ancestral cult although the literature consulted does not actually refer to it as a manipulative religious practice. Bargaining with a Spirit Being is not foreign to Christianity. When Christians take vows and make promises to God to perform certain acts in response to certain blessings they might receive, such practices could be described as 'manipulative'.

The Johannesburg Chinese traditionalists continue to believe that in Chinese religion, the afterlife parallels the world of the living according to the pattern of imperial-bureaucratic China. The strict adherence to the hierarchical order and also to the area of jurisdiction for each official is reflected in the rites observed in the ancestor cult as well as the worship of the pantheon, whether of Taoist or Buddhist origin.

There is every likelihood that many Chinese involved in the ancestor cult do in fact worship the ancestors when they depend on them for protection, prosperity and the averting of calamities which might ensue upon the neglect of such worship. Feng-Shui, in the form of merits accumulated during the lifetime of the ancestors, influences the fate of their descendants whose successes serve as evidence of the virtues of the ancestors. Chinese people are prepared to seek help, happiness and

prosperity from any supernatural agency (Smith 1970:190) and if the ancestors are able to assist the family in its search after happiness and prosperity, then ancestors also ought to be placated and worshipped by the offsprings.

When such worship does occur, there is never any mention of love and devotion as in the sense of Christian worship of Jesus Christ. Ancestral worship is based on obligatory ritualism and also a fear of the spirits. It is for these reasons that the Chinese offer the daily joss sticks and the other more occasional ritual offerings with mixed feelings. They cannot afford to offend the spirits by neglecting them but they also dislike the lighting of joss sticks lest other spirits are attracted to the home, an occurrence which the Chinese fear (Interview Mrs FD: 17.3.1989). The ancestor spirit tablet is an attempt to house the spirit and also to limit its area of influence to that particular locality. It appears that a social distance between the living and the ancestral spirits is maintained. A similar conclusion was also reached in a study of the invocations and their accompanying ritual acts among the Zulu and the Cape Nguni by Hammond-Tooke (1978:147).

7.2.4.2 The arguments in favour of showing respect and remembrance

The term 'veneration of the ancestors' in this study is synonymous with 'the show of respect to the ancestors'. The term 'veneration' as used here does not therefore require the need to trace the source of holiness which is associated with the 'veneration of saints' to which Hammond-Tooke referred (1978:138).

The Johannesburg Chinese Protestants were asked to choose between the terms 'ancestor worship' and 'ancestor veneration' (Q20) with the term 'veneration' being equated with 'the show of respect'. Only 117 of the 129 respondents completed this question. Those

who thought that the worship of ancestors was the more 'accurate' designation numbered 38,4% and those who thought that the veneration of ancestors was more correct, totalled 61,5%.

A strong tendency exists which equates worship with the rite of sacrifice or the offering of food to a spirit being. The African response to this interpretation is somewhat contrary. Mbiti (1969:9) disagreed with this viewpoint when he noted that libation and food given to the departed are 'tokens of fellowship, hospitality and respect...'. These 'acts of family relationships' should not be considered as worship, they are merely 'symbols of continuity and contact'. Those who are remembered in this manner are the 'living dead' that is, the spirits of those who died up to four or five generations back.

Such departed are considered to be still alive, and the rites practised show that people still recognise the presence of the departed. The practice of remembering the dead is considered as being 'realistic since nobody wants to be forgotten by his family immediately after dying' (Mbiti 1981:123,125).

This African perspective adds a useful dimension to the argument that the Chinese do not worship their deceased but only remembers them with respect in the burial and subsequent rites in which offerings are made to them.

Rites play an important role in the governmental, social, and religious spheres of Chinese culture. Many Chinese believe that by carefully practising the appropriate rites, nature and the order of the universe can be maintained or be brought back to the natural course of events to serve the needs of man. According to Max Weber (1951:28) because the ritual 'compelled the spirits' the Chinese felt the need to carefully observe the rites.

These sentiments are also shared by Radcliffe-Brown (1963:158) who noted that people in China and elsewhere believe in the

efficacious power of rites in that evil can be averted and blessings can be brought about.

The story of Emperor T'ang of the Shang dynasty (c.1766-1122 BC) illustrates this deep-rooted faith in ritualism. After seven years of unmitigated drought, the ruler offered himself to be a ritual human sacrifice in order that T'ien the Sky Deity might be appeased and the drought be broken (Legge 1880:54-55).

By the third century BC the famous Confucian interpreter Hsun Tzu saw rites as possessing three bases: Heaven and Earth; the ancestors, and rulers and teachers. The first base establishes life, the second, the basis of the family, and the third, order in society. To illustrate how the observance of rites can be of value to society, Hsun Tzu counselled that the sacrificial rites in the worship of the Sky Deity, could only be conducted by the Emperor. Altars to the Deity of the Earth could only be attended to by a feudal lord or his superior. The lower officials were allowed to sacrifice to a correspondingly lower order of Spirit Beings. Thus, even in sacrifices, rites served to indicate that the exalted should serve the exalted, while the humble should serve the humble (Watson 1967; Hsun Tzu:91).

Confucians were careful to observe all the requisite rites related to the funerary practices. According to Analect 1:9, the careful attention given to burial rites and the observance of offerings made to the dead, will result in the moral improvement of the people (Ware 1955:22). Confucius was reported to have referred to a dictum that offerings to the ancestors should be made as though they were actually present in person (Ware 1955:31).

Confucianism is a rationalistic approach to life and the deceased were not thought of as being able to partake of the food offered to them. The ritualism involved was to help channel the grief of the bereaved in a socially acceptable manner whereby he

could express his continued appreciation and filiality. In other words the performance of the rites served as a catharsis. The fixed ritualistic framework in which such emotions were expressed in the ceremonies prevented any excesses of their emotions and thus saved the mourners from any psychological or emotional injury (Bodde 1981:321).

In noting that much of Chinese worship was connected with mortuary rites for deceased ancestors, Smith (1970:652) pointed out that the main purpose of such rites was 'to express gratitude to the originators and recall the beginnings' as well as to cultivate moral values and to foster refinements of human relations.

Perhaps the strongest proof that the Confucians did not intend the ancestors to be worshipped was the specific directive given by Hsun Tzu that each article which was to be buried with the deceased should have the form of the real article but that it should be incomplete in its manufacture so that it would be useless in real life. The purpose for the inferior grave article was to highlight the difference between the living and the dead while giving full recognition to the Confucian teaching that the dead ought to be treated in death as they were treated in life. The present day practice of transferring articles by immolatory means to the deceased appears to be a degeneration of the early Confucian beliefs and practices. Belief in the afterlife which was introduced with the propagation of the Chinese form of Buddhism influenced Taoism to the extent that in addition to its own star deities and a complex pantheon of gods and demons, it also contained elements of Buddhist theology and Confucian ethics.

The following quotation aptly sums up the Confucian guidelines as far as the filial duties of a son are concerned.

> The funeral rites have no other purpose than this: to make clear the principle of life and death, to send the dead man away with grief

> and reverence, and to lay him at last in the ground. At the interment one reverently lays his form away; at the sacrifices one reverently serves his spirit; and by means of inscriptions, eulogies, and genealogical records one reverently hands down his name to posterity. In serving the living, one ornaments the beginning; in sending off the dead, one ornaments the end. When beginning and end are fully attended to, then the duties of a filial son are complete and the way of the sage has reached its fulfillment.
>
> (Watson 1967; Hsun Tzu:105)

The historical Confucian use of rites in the burial and sacrificial ceremonies therefore strongly indicates that no worship was intended as the deceased were not able to receive such worship. The rites involved were designed to help the living cope with the loss of their family members.

The Chinese have responded to religion on two levels since their early history. The literate class who were basically Confucian in their approach to religious practices were rationalistic in their belief of the soul as indicated in Hsun Tzu's writings. The peasants or common people were more prone to be engaged in religious rites and ceremonies which were more closely associated with their livelihood. Bodde (1981:133) suggested that from the very beginnings of Chinese history the most vital and sincere form of religious feeling has been experienced in the worship of the departed ancestors.

The terms 'worship' and 'veneration' of the ancestors have been used by Chinese and non-Chinese writers whether they intended to convey respect, veneration or the observance of a mortuary rite (Smith 1970:652, The Council of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance 1977:341, Bavinck 1960:250). Some writers such as Ching

(1978:168) and Freedman (1966:153) have drawn a distinction between the two terms.

7.3 CLOSING ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE THESIS

7.3.1 A different cultural mindset

The Chinese Protestants in Johannesburg may not worship their ancestors but they do respect them. Even those who observe the mortuary rituals connected with the ancestors deny that any worship occurs even though they offer food, libations and other cultic articles such as mock money and joss sticks. They do not equate the offerings with worship at all, contrary to the interpretations which others in the Judaeo-Christian tradition might attribute to such acts.

N Smart (1969:32) saw religion as an organism and he used the imagery of a picture in which he saw each religious element likened to a colour. Such colours may appear in different pictures but the surrounding patches and colour combinations give it meaning. In the same way religious elements or concepts, though appearing similar in different religions, really can only be fully understood in their own religious milieu. For example 'Allah' may share many similar characteristic with the Christian God but the Johannine concept of 'Logos' affects the Christian concept of the Creator God.

This perspective may further be linked with the understanding provided by Bosch (1977:174) who acknowledged a simple yet revealing insight in the attempt to understand the nature of 'a foreign religion' when he wrote the following sentence. 'When we say that every religion revolves on its own axis, we say in part that each religion poses and answers questions which bring satisfaction within those religious frameworks.'

It is unlikely that the Christian who had never been fully

involved in the actual Chinese worship of the ancestors will ever be able to understand or accept the bases or the rationale of certain rites. The Chinese who continue to practise such rites because of tradition, may not have posed any questions. They may not even be seeking answers at all within this religious framework.

7.3.2 Chinese culture and the Protestant churches

Chinese Protestants need to develop their knowledge and appreciation of Chinese culture and recognize their ethnic roots. This does not bind them to follow the traditional beliefs nor practise some or all of the customs, many of which are regional and perhaps unsuitable in a Western-orientated country such as South Africa.

The historical sense attached to an institution such as filial piety needs to be appreciated as it forms not only the foundation of ancestor veneration and respect but it also determines the interpersonal relationships which should ideally exist in each Chinese family. The Chinese have developed the teachings of filial piety to such an extent that the honour which is given to parents while they are alive must continue after their death, for their souls continue to exist and the fate of their souls is dependent on what is done for them by their offsprings. A parallel may be drawn here between the Roman Catholic practice of paying to have mass said to release the soul of a loved one from purgatory.

The Johannesburg Chinese Protestant churches lack a theology of culture. The ancient culture of China and its many parallels in the teachings of the Chinese sages with teachings of Christ serve as a natural bridge between any attempt to minister to Chinese people within the context of their own culture. Christianity does not confront Chinese culture as a foreign culture. The Christian faith is above culture and it should be allowed to permeate the

host culture with its spiritual truth.

The efforts of the Chinese Protestant churches to 'counter' the influences of the ancestor cultic practices are insignificant when compared to the vastness and the importance of the subject. The dogmatic judgement made by some church leaders in describing the ancestor cult as 'idolatory' lacks a proper definition as well as a Chinese cultural perspective. The conclusion may be correct but the method of approach and the form of counselling involved must be developed not only on a Biblical basis but it must also be suitable for applying to the Chinese people.

The Christian gospel does not need to be cosseted and protected. The gospel is not a hot house pot-plant. It must be able to grow in foreign soil, no matter how infertile that soil may appear to man. The fact that the People's Republic of China at present has a Christian population numbering approximately 20 million souls (Lambert 1989:33) is proof of the self generative power of the gospel even in a very harsh ideological climate.

Chinese Christians therefore need to learn to accept and to be proud of their cultural heritage. The kingship of Christ over the world includes China and her ancient and glorious culture. When all believers are ultimately united in heaven, and all the nations stand before God to worship Him (Revelations 5:8-9 TLB; 15:4 TLB) is it not likely that each nation will bring to Him the best of their culture and praise Him in their own tongue? Is culture not one of God's manifold gifts to man (James 1:17 GNB)?

7.3.3 Erosion or growth of cultic practices in Johannesburg

Have the cultic practices in Johannesburg eroded as a result of the presence and the apparent success of the Chinese Protestant churches? The statistics and the information obtained from interviews and surveys are not absolutely clear that a significant erosion has taken place or that the initial rate of

success of the churches has been maintained.

Fifteen years ago King observed (1974:168) that there was a waning interest in the 'extra-domestic' or public rites connected with the ancestors.

Some evidence appear to point to the opposite, that the ancestor cult is in fact gaining ground.

A study conducted by Smedley (1984:73) in 1976-1977 of the Chinese in South Africa found that 25,2% of the respondents between the ages of 20 and 49 celebrated Ch'ing Ming while the percentage rose to 50% when applied to respondents who were 50 years and older. The overall percentage of those who celebrated Ch'ing Ming was 29,5%.

The erosion or the growth of cultic practices in Johannesburg may be measured by the number of people attending the Hung Cheng and the Seu Yea dinners. The writer was informed that approximately 70 adult Hakka Chinese met for the communal meal (Interview Mrs FD: 31.5.1989) and that the 'Fok' clan was able to host a dinner for just over 100 of its members (Interview Mr SL Fok: 31.5.1989).

Mrs FD informed the writer that the number of people at the dinner was higher this year but she was not able to supply any statistics as to how many people actually visited the cemetery as most of the Hakka people tend to visit the cemeteries as families and then meet together for the evening meal.

Mr SL Fok indicated in the interview that more of his clan members attended the dinner this year than last year and that the clan was preparing a map of Southern China from where his clan originated. It is planned to distribute the map and a clan family chart to each family.

Mr W Pon, the managing director of South Africa's largest import-export firm dealing in Chinese goods, informed the writer (Interview: 21.3.1989) that he had noticed an increase in the sale of mock money and joss sticks due to the increase of immigrants from Taiwan and Hongkong. As far as the local Chinese were concerned he thought that the trade in these articles had decreased due to the fact that many of the elderly people are now attending churches and that once they get into the churches they will not want to follow the old customs. He estimated that over the past ten years interest in the cult of the ancestors had dropped by about fifty percent. One of the main reasons is the lack of older people to guide the younger ones in these matters. He also intimated that not many of the local people who are under fifty buy these funeral articles.

The random sample of 100 unmarried people was used to ascertain the type of cultic activity which occurred in their homes. The statistics obtained from that sample indicated that 23% of their homes had joss sticks lit on a daily basis and 19% on special occasions. Five percent said that their families occasionally lit joss sticks. Food was offered on special occasions in 32% of the homes while 4% indicated that food was offered to the ancestors on an occasional basis.

Thus, in spite of the efforts of the Chinese Protestants to convert their compatriots, the ancestor cult continues to be practised, albeit in a much watered down version when compared with the practices in the Far East. The possibility that the cult will rapidly lose ground due to the growth of the Chinese Protestant churches is a remote possibility as these churches are not evidencing a growth rate commensurate with such an expected radical shift in cultural loyalty. The ancestral cult will always be assured of support because it is historically anchored to Chinese culture and also because of the presence of the large Roman Catholic community which allows the sacrifices to the ancestors, subject to certain conditions.

The nature of the ancestor cult is an important consideration in this assessment. One of the characteristics of the ancestor cult is its continued tenacious grip on the hearts and minds of the Chinese. A major reason for its continued and widespread influence is its close association with Chinese culture. This it accomplishes by means of the institution of filial piety which serves as a powerful agency of diffusion. The diffusion of the cult is therefore due to its cultural link with the Chinese world-view and life-style.

The Chinese people share a common fear of the dead and of the unknown. The fear of retribution by the ancestors for neglecting their spiritual needs constitutes another strong reason why Chinese continue to practise aspects of the ancestor cult.

7.3.4 The ongoing struggle between change and orthodoxy

The Church will always face an array of problems associated with change and with orthodoxy of faith. The changing mores and values in society as well as the issues related to different races worshipping together, are some of the other aspects of life which the Chinese Protestants will need to face. In many ways the ancestor cult is basically an ethnic issue which may not even appear to be as urgent an issue to resolve when compared with the societal issues in South Africa at the present time.

While the above remarks may be true for the Church, the individual Chinese Protestant believer will also need to decide the course of Christian action and attitude when confronted with these social issues.

The 'cut-and-dried' dogmatic form of Christianity which is governed by rules and regulations may be easier to follow but its application will be less challenging for the Church and for the individual. Only in wrestling with the Bible, with his heart and

with his traditional culture, will the Christian experience the glow of spiritual growth. The same may be said of the Church, either corporately or singly, in the Johannesburg Chinese Protestant community.

The four decades that the Chinese Protestants have had to make a significant difference to the practice of the ancestor cult in Johannesburg is more than half a lifetime in terms of an average lifespan. Compared with the antiquity of the ancestor cult, the Protestants have hardly started to take their first step in tackling their task. The efforts expanded by the Churches up to the present have naturally not been totally dedicated to the institution of the ancestor cult. The relatively recent awakening by some congregations during the mid-1980s to the strong residual influences of the cult within the churches, and the measurable successes they have experienced in their special programmes to discuss the topic of the ancestor cult, does augur well for their future endeavours in that direction.

The research clearly indicated that the Protestant Churches in Johannesburg have made some headway in enabling some of the older members of the community to understand certain 'non-Christian' aspects of the ancestor cult and to have influenced them to cease performing certain cultic practices. These efforts cannot however be considered as significant or completely successful.

The above findings therefore confirm the thesis:
'Although the cult of the ancestors will continue to be practised in the foreseeable future, the growing influence of Protestant teaching is bringing about resistance to the practice and the level of acceptance of this cult among the Johannesburg Protestant Chinese'.

GLOSSARY OF CHINESE TERMS TRANSLITERATED INTO ENGLISH.

THE TRANSLITERATED CHINESE WORD IS FOLLOWED BY THE BASIC MEANING IN ENGLISH. WHERE NECESSARY A BRIEF EXPLANATION IS PROVIDED. SOME TERMS ARE TRANSLITERATED INTO THREE DIALECTS; VIZ MANDARIN (M), HAKKA (H) AND CANTONESE (C).

TRANSLITERATION	PAGE	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	EXPLANATION
B'EA (H) PEI (M)	338	DIVINING WOODS	Two shells or especial--ly crafted wooden ones used in divination.
CH'I (M)	119	BREATH	The full manifestation of the Yang soul in a living body. Also re-fers to Neo-Confucian 'ethers'.
CH'I MIEN-TIEN (M)	84	HALL OF ANNUAL PRAYERS	The largest of the temples in the Forbidden City complex in Beijing.
CH'IA CHIAO (M)	104	FAMILY TEACHING	Moral and ethical teachings provided at home.
CHIAO (M)	66	TEACHING	A teaching. The term applies to Confucian--ism, Buddhism and Taoism. It is also associated with 'home upbringing'. See: SAN CHIAO.
CH'ING MING (M) CHENG MENG (C) CH'EAN MEAN (H)	139	CLEAR AND BRIGHT	Literally 'clear bright': a reference to early Spring. Graves tended, and offerings made to ancestors.
CHOY SUN (C)	23	GOD OF WEALTH	One of the most popular house-hold deities.

CHU (M)	282	LORD	The honorary title for a deceased male adult after the 'dotting rite' which occurs after the 49th day of death. See: SHEN-WEI.
CHUN TZU (M)	261	GENTLEMAN	Man of nobility, the 'superior man' in Confucianism.
CHUNG YUAN (M)	142	FESTIVAL OF THE HUNGRY GHOSTS	Family ancestral spirits visit their living relatives on the 15th of 7th lunar month (usually August) Local temples sponsor buns and drinks for the hungry ghosts. Villagers eat the food afterwards.
CHUNG YUNG (M)	106	DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN	Classic originally a chapter in the Li Chi. The 'Central Way' of living in Confucian philosophy.
D'HOON LEUNG (H)	103	INSTALLING THE TABLETS IN THE ANCESTRAL HALL	A ceremony which occurs once every few years when a number of tablets need to be installed in the ancestral hall.
FAH P'AHN (H)	7	MOCK IGNOTS	Mock silver and gold tinted paper rolled up and burnt as ignots at funerals and on other special occasions.
FENG-SHUI (M)	21	WIND-WATER OR GEOMANCY	Originally a geomantic concept. It also means accumulated merits of the ancestors, or good fortune. See: YING.
FOOK SAAM (H)	336	CALICO MOURNING CLOTHES	Mourning clothes worn by close relatives.
FU (M)	73	SAINTLY PERSON	

FUN NEH (H)	337	SOUL BANNER	The temporary residence of the soul for the du--ration of the Inviting home of the soul ceremony.
HAAM N'YEAP MOON (H)	18	INVITING HOME OF THE SOUL CEREMONY	Rite of inviting home the soul of the dead into his ancestral home. See: MOON SUN.
HAN WEI LIANG-CHIN NAM-PEI CH'AO FO-CHIAO SHIH (M)	266	HISTORY OF BUDDHISM DURING THE HAN,WEI, TWO CHIN,NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN DYNASTIES	An important historical study which includes the Chinese interpretation of Indian Buddhism.
HEONG (H) HSIANG (M)	7	JOSS STICK	Each morning one joss stick is lit and placed in a joss stick receptacle in front of the ancestor tablet.
HEONG LOO (H)	7	JOSS STICK RECEPTACLE	It may be ornate or simple, e g a plain glass tumbler contain--ing uncooked rice or an expensive porcelain one.
HSIANG-WEI (M)	185	SEAT OF INCENSE	The substitute term required by the RC Church for 'shen-wei' (Seat of God) in ancestor veneration.
HSIAO (M)	106	FILIAL PIETY	The concept of concern for the welfare of parents. Developed into an institution which formed the basis of ancestor veneration.
HSIAO CHING (M)	109	CLASSIC OF FILIAL PIETY	Outlines the basis and the practice of filial piety.
H'UN (M)	119	SPIRITUAL SOUL	The animus or Yang spiritual soul created at moment of birth. Man possesses Hun and P'o souls. See: SUN.

HUNG CHENG (C) CHEE CHIANG (H)	139	BI-ANNUAL VISITS TO THE GRAVES	The graves are ceremo--niously visited twice a year at Ch'ing Ming (Spring) and Shui I (M) (Autumn). These visits are called Hung Cheng (C)and Chee Chiang (H). Graves are also swept.
HUNG CHENG JEAT (C)	213	SWEEPING OF THE GRAVES FESTIVAL	See: HUNG CHENG, SAAU MOO
I CHING (M)	22	CLASSIC OF CHANGES	A book of divination used since the 12th century BC.
I HO-CH'UAN (M)	33	RIGHTEOUS AND HARMONIOUS FISTS	The name used by the Chinese to describe the Boxer Rebellion of 1900.
I KUAN TAO (M)	265	UNITY SECT	A relatively new sect in Taiwan.
I-LI (M)	4	BOOK OF ETIQUETTE AND CEREMONIAL	Twelfth century BC book: the forerunner of the Ceremonial of Chou.
JEN (M)	275	HUMAN KINDNESS	The highest quality of humanism.
JOE SCENE (C) TZE KUNG (H)	88	ANCESTOR	
JU TSUNG SHEN CHIAO (M)	264	CONFUCIAN SPIRIT RELIGION	A new cult in Taiwan.
KAN YING PIEN (M)	128	BOOK OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS	Written by: Ho Hung (4th century BC).
KEEN TZE KUNG (H)	7	MAKING AN OFFERING OR SACRIFICE TO THE ANCESTORS	A difference is obser--ved between the vene--ration of ancestors (paai) and sacrificing (keen) to them.

KENG SUN (C) KEEN SIN (H)	195	MAKING AN OFFERING OR A SACRIFICE TO THE DEITIES	Worship of the deities without making a sacrifice is expressed as 'paai sun'. With a sacrifice, it is 'keng sun'.
KUAN TI (M)	23	GOD OF WAR	Also called Kuan Yu of 2nd century AD. Deified as a culture hero in 1594. Also god of literature and a demon destroyer.
KUAN YIN (M)	23	GODDESS OF MERCY	Originally the Indian male god Avalokitesvara. Kuan Yin is one of the most popular deities.
KUEI (M) SOUL	121	FEMALE SOUL	Kuei soul is negative, ghostly,'female'.It is earthly and therefore 'yin'. In the living this soul operates as the p'o. At death it returns to the earth.
KUEI (M,C,H)	119	GHOSTS	Yin souls were con--sidered as evil,and therefore as ghosts.
KUEI-SHEN (M)	119	NEGATIVE-POSITIVE SPIRITUAL FORCES	The combined use of kuei (ghosts) and shen (spirits) indicate qualitative attributes. Kuei is negative, shen is positive.
LA PA CHIEH (M)	141	EIGHTH DAY OF THE TWELFTH MONTH	Festival. Also called Festival of the eight Genii. See: LA PA CHOU.
LA PA CHOU (M)	142	EIGHT CEREAL GRUEL	Special gruel of eight cereals and dates es--pecially prepared du-ring Eight Genii fes--tival for offering to the ancestors.
LEAN (H)	90	SPIRITUALLY EMPOWERED	A term which may be used with reference to people or to deities and spirits.

LEAN VOOK (H)	7	MOCK HOUSE	A paper house containing all the 'modern conveniences' including servants. It is transferred to the netherworld by burning.
LEI SHI (C)	217	GOOD LUCK MONEY	Given in a red packet on celebratory occasions. Good Luck money cancels the 'bad luck'incurred by attending a funeral.
LI (M)	134	SET LAWS	The operation of the 'ch'i' or breath of nature, is dependent on li.
LI CHI (M)	106	BOOK OF RITES	One of the oldest Classics. Contains some philosophical reflections. One of three ritual texts.
LING H'UN (M)	120	HUN SOUL	Another term for Hun soul. 'Ling'associated with rain making rituals. Term is the preferred word for 'soul' in Christian circles.
LOCK KUEI TAU (H)	341	DESCEND INTO THE EARTH	The descent of the soul into the earth to become an evil spirit.
LOCK TEE (H)	124		SEE: LOCK KUEI TAU
LUN YU (M)	82	ANALECTS	'Sayings of Confucius' Answers to ethical and Moral questions posed to Confucius.
LUP TZOOK (H)	337	CANDLES	Red candles used for ritual purposes.

MAAH SAAM (H)	336	SACKCLOTH MOURNING CLOTHES	Mourning clothes made of sack cloth and worn by the immediate mem--bers of the deceased.
MIN CH'UAN (M)	36	DEMOCRACY	Sun Yat-sen's concept of how government should be exercised.
MIN SHENG (M)	36	PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD	Sun Yat-sen's concept of how the people should be provided for.
MIN TSU (M)	36	NATIONALISM	Sun Yat-sen's concept of nationhood.
MING (M)	120	BRIGHT	Another name for the Yang soul. Term first used in Li Chi. Some believe that when the ch'i is separated from the body, it be--comes a refulgent spirit called Ming.
MOON SUN (C) - MOON SIN (H)	196	DOOR GODS	Guardian gods which keep out all spirits not formally invited.
NG'EOON TZ (H)	7	MOCK MONEY	Mock money in various denominations used by deceased. Also called Hell Bank money. It is burnt to transfer it to the ancestors.
PA CH'A (M)	141	FESTIVAL OF THE EIGHT GENII	The eight genii protect the hunters and crops. See: LA PA CHOU.
PAAI JOE SCENE (C) PAAI TZE KUNG (H)	194 7	SHOW OBEISANCE OR RESPECT TO THE ANCESTORS	It is wrong to say that one 'keng'an--cestors if no offer--ing is made. One may 'paai' them or the deities by only using joss sticks. See: KENG SUN

P'O (M)	119	SENTIENT SOUL	The anima or Yin soul which becomes a ghost or kuei soul. Created at the moment of con--ception. Man has p'o and hun souls. See: H'UN.
REN (M)	144	MAN	The Cosmological Triad consist of Man, Earth and Heaven.
SAAU H'A (H)	337	IMMOLATORY TRANSFER 'DOWN'	The transfer of mock items for the deceased by immolatory means.
SAAU HEONG (H)	7	LIGHTING JOSS STICKS	To light joss sticks and to execute the customary bow.
SAAU MOO (H)	343	SWEEPING OF THE GRAVES	The visits to the graves during the festival of Spring (Ch'ing Ming). The graves are cleaned and offerings made to the ancestors. See: CH'ING MING.
SAN CHIAO (M)	67	THREE TEACHINGS	Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are col--lectively known by this description.
SAN MIN CHU-I (M)	36	THREE PRINCIPLES OF THE PEOPLE	Dr Sun Yat-sen's poli--tical dogmas summed up in Nationalism, Democracy and People's Livelihood.
SEN SIN DI (H)	124	LOW PSYCHIC AWARENESS	A person with a low psychic awareness is able to detect the presence of spirits.
SEN SIN KOW (H)	124	HIGH PSYCHIC AWARENESS	A person with a high psychic awareness is above the state of detecting the presence of spirits.

SHANG TI (M)	70	EMPEROR ABOVE	A title for God.
SHEN (M) SUN (C) SIN (H)	118 119	SPIRIT OR SOUL SPIRIT OR GOD	A word that refers to the immaterial part of man. Soul and Spirit are interchangeable terms. See: H'UN.
SHEN (M) SOUL	121	MALE SOUL	Shen soul is positive, spiritual, male. Also called ch'i in the living but 'ming' as a refulgent spirit after death.
SHEN-MING (M)	121	DIVINE SPIRITS	Combination of two terms distinguish good spirits from demons.
SHEN-WEI (M)	185	SEAT OF GOD	The usual term used on an ancestral tablet. Shen can mean god, spirit or soul. See: CHU and WANG.
SHIH (M)	73	OFFICIAL	
SHU (M)	134	NUMERICAL PROPOR--TIONS OF THE UNIVERSE	The breath of nature (ch'i) operates according to set laws (li). This can be illustrated in the numerical proportions of the universe.
SHU CHING (M)	92	CLASSIC OF HISTORY	
SHUI I (M) SAAU YEE TZE (H) SEU YEA (C)	140	BURNING CLOTHES FESTIVAL	The burning of paper clothes and other items in Autumn.
SIN P'HAI (H) SUN CHEE P'HAI (C)	6	ANCESTRAL SPIRIT TABLET OR SCROLL	Also called a scroll when paper is used. Tablet is made of wood.

SOME F'HOON CHEAT P'HUCK (H)	124	THREE SOULS, SEVEN SPIRITUAL ENTITIES	The belief that an individual possesses three souls and seven spiritual entities or 'shadows'.
SOME SEN (H)	337	THREE OFFERINGS	In antiquity: offering of Pork, beef, sheep or goat to deities. In modern times: offer--ing of fish, chicken, and pork to ancestors.
SONG TE'AHN (H)	124	ASCEND INTO HEAVEN	The spirit's ascension.
SUN (C)	194	GOD, DEITY, SPIRIT	Synonymns. Plural form refers to a conglome--ration of superna--tural beings, including ethereal persona of the deceased. See: SHEN, SUN, SIN.
SUN CHU T'OI (C)	7	ANCESTRAL ALTAR	Also called a 'god--shelf'.
SUNG SE'AU (H)	336	BIRTH SIGNS	Twelve animal signs associated with the twelve year cycle.
SUNG-TSU (M)	139	BIDDING FAREWELL TO THE ANCESTORS	Ceremony held on 3rd morning of New Year for ancestors who had been invited for the New Year festivities.
SZ PEA (H)	337	SERVANTS	Paper models of youth--ful servants which are burnt and 'sent' to the deceased.
T'AI-PING (M)	34	GREAT PEACE	An anti-Manchu armed rebellion (1850-1864).

TAO (M)	76	WAY	The word can mean Path, Way, Truth, Doctrine, Word, or Law. It is the Absolute, the eternal ubiquitous Principle by which the world was produced and which supports and governs it.
TAO TE CHING (M)	276	CLASSIC OF THE WAY	5 000 word classic purported to have been Lao Tze's work.
TAY YOK (C) TEE NGE'OOK (H)	116	NETHERWORLD	The world of the dead.
TI (M)	70	EMPEROR	Name of chief Shang dynasty deity. Name was changed to Shang Ti 'the emperor above' when rulers assumed Ti title for 'emperor'
T'IEN (M)	85	EMPEROR-ON-HIGH	Another title for God.
T'IEN (M) TE'AHN SIN (H) TEEN SUN (C)	70	HEAVEN, GOD, SKY DEITY	An ancient name for the Supreme Being,the Sky Deity, Emperor on High. No statues or images made of this deity. In antiquity a round piece of jade with a circular hole in the centre repre--sented Heaven. See: TI
T'IEN HSIA (M)	94	ALL UNDER HEAVEN	The ancient name of China. The term has geopolitico-theocratic implications.
T'IEN MING (M)	79	MANDATE OF HEAVEN	The moral instrument by which rulers exer--cised their authority to rule. It was an early Chou dynasty concept.
T'IEN-TI (M)	81	HEAVEN AND EARTH	The personal God who was worshipped and sacrificed to by the Emperor.

T'IEN TI CHIAO (M)	264	RELIGION OF THE HEAVENLY GOD	A modern Taiwanese cult founded in 1986.
T'IEN, TI, SHEN, MING (M)	75	HEAVEN, EARTH, SPIRIT, BRIGHTNESS	The four-fold appel--lation used by the Chinese for God.
T'IEN TZE (M)	70	SON OF HEAVEN	In China, it was a title which only the Emperor could use.
TOE TAY KONG (C)	196	EARTH GOD	Male earth fertility god.
TONGUE H'A (H)	338	LOUNGE	A lounge or a minor hall in a large family home. Such a room is used for ceremonies and celebrations.
TSAO WANG (M)	23	GOD OF THE HEARTH	Also called the Kitchen God.
TS'UN (M)	131	INCHES	The ancestor tablet had to measure 4"x12" to denote four seasons and twelve months.
TSUNG (M)	92	ANCESTRAL TEMPLE	First mentioned in Classic of History. Ancestral hall is less ornate than a temple.
TSUNG CHIAO (M)	68	RELIGION	The Chinese equivalent of Religion. Only in use since the 19th century.
TUAN WU (M)	141	MOMENT OF CONFRONTATION	Term which describes the very moment of resistence or opposition between Yin (darkness) and Yang (light). This is the celebration of the Summer Solstice.
TUNG-MENG HUI (M)	36	UNITED LEAGUE	A political body founded by Dr Sun Yat-sen to help over--throw the Manchu government of China.

T'U TI (M)	75		SEE: TOE TAY KONG (C).
TZ YEE (H)	7	MOCK CLOTHES	Paper clothes burnt in Autumn to provide the deceased with warm clothes for winter.
TZE KUNG T'HONG (H)	139	ANCESTRAL HALL	Where clan ancestral tablets are preserved.
TZE PAO (H)	337		SEE: NGEOON TZ (H).
TZO TZAI (H)	127	CONDUCTING A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY	
WANG (M)	282	PRINCE	The funeral title of an adult male on his grave identifier be--fore the 49th day of his death. See: CHU.
YEE TZ (H)	7	FUNERARY PAPER ITEMS	Inclusive term for items burnt at funeral.e g mock paper house, money, ignots. Practice first allowed in 8th century AD at the court of Emperor Wang Yu.
YING (M)	134	FORM AND APPEARANCE OF NATURE	Human eye capable of recognizing form and appearance of nature. Ying, ch'i, li, and shu, constitute the major elements of Feng-Shui. See: FENG-SHUI.
YIN-YANG (M)	119	DUALISTIC ABSTRACT COSMIC FORCES OR PRINCIPLES	The two mutually com--plimentary principles or forces in Chinese metaphysics and philosophy.
YU LAN HUI (M) YU LAN P'EN (M)	142		SEE: CHUNG YUAN

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APPENDIX A

THE INVITING HOME OF THE SOUL CEREMONY AS PRACTISED IN THE SONG LOH YEE VILLAGE (CANTON) IN 1988.

1.0 PERSONAL DETAILS OF THE INFORMER

1.1 THE INFORMER'S BACKGROUND

The informer Mrs F Dateling was born in South China in the province of Canton, in the county of Moyean on 12 May 1922 and migrated to South Africa at the age of eighteen. She and her late husband (b 3.11.1922 d 22.8.1986) came from the village of Song Loh Yee. Soon after her husband's burial on 31.8.1986 in Johannesburg, she wrote to China to inform her husband's adopted brother to observe the Inviting home of the soul ceremony in order that her husband's soul should be invited back into the ancestral home.
The deceased is survived by his wife, five daughters and a son.

1.2 THE COST OF THE CEREMONIES

For the services of five priests, meals for 160 people including 'additional' monies which family claimed to have used - RMB 4 000 or approximately R2 000.
The initial ceremony at the time of death cost R100.

1.3 GROUP PRESSURE TO CONFORM TO TRADITION

At the end of April 1988, the widow returned with the youngest daughter to her husband's ancestral home in order to engage a team of five Buddhist priests to repeat the ceremony. The purpose of this second ceremony was to ensure that the soul was invited home according to the traditional Chinese rites. She was afraid that she might be accused by relatives and friends of not having observed all the necessary ceremonies for the repose of her husband's soul should she not observe the ceremony. She informed the writer that after observing the necessary rites, She felt at ease and that her conscience was at rest. She indicated that although her late husband was not a believer in any religion, she could not simply neglect to have the traditional rites performed.

2.0 THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CEREMONY

2.1 THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE ASTROLOGER

Before any rites could be performed, the informer had to consult an astrologer whose tasks involved the choice of the most appropriate date and hour for the observance of the ceremony. Various factors such as the late husband's age and that of the informer had to be considered, the matching of the **sung se'au** (birth sign) of the deceased and those who were invited to the rite. The informer believes that this procedure may have been necessary in order to avert the possible clash of different cosmic birth signs. Those whose birth signs clashed, were asked not to be present at the actual invitation to the soul to enter the home. They could however be present and participate once the inviting rite of the ceremony had been completed by the priests.

2.2 THE MODE OF INVITING THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the ceremony included all the clansmen and their families who shared the same surname with the deceased. A few close friends of the deceased and his wife's were also invited to share in the ceremony.
Beetle nuts were purchased and a number of these were split into halves. Each half a nut served as a substitute invitation to an individual to attend the ceremony. Where a couple was invited, two halves were handed to them. A whole nut indicated that the whole family was invited to the ceremony.

2.3 MOURNING CLOTHES AND THE GOOD LUCK RED PACKETS

Two types of mourning clothes were worn: **fook saam** (calico mourning clothes) for relatives, and **maah saam** (sackcloth mourning clothes) which the immediate family members of the deceased had to wear. These special mourning clothes could be borrowed from any family which may have had a recent bereavement.

It is customary that red packets or **fung pao**, containing the equivalent of R1 for each outfit, are given to the owner in order to ward off any bad luck which may result from the ceremony. In the informer's case, her brother-in-law was the owner of the mourning clothes and he was therefore the recipient of these good-luck red packets. All the red packets were distributed at

the conclusion of the ceremony. The nephews and nieces of the deceased each received a red packet to counteract the bad luck which had come upon them when they dressed in the mourning clothes. Each mourner who acted as a substitute for an absent child of the deceased received an additional red packet from the widow.

2.4 THE PREPARATION OF THE PAPER MODELS

Prior to the ceremony, a number of paper models were prepared to be **saau h'a** (immolatory transfer 'down') to the deceased for his use. A large house in the traditional upturned roof structure approximately 3 m high, 80 cm wide and 1,5 m long; a bed, a car, a TV set and a treasure chest which was filled with **tze pao** which is another Hakka term for mock money. Of special interest were the almost life-size young man and young woman **sz pea** (servants). With the exception of the paper house, all other paper models were kept in a side room until the saau h'a rite was to be performed. A **fun neh** (soul banner) has the appearance of a lantern. It is constructed of paper, a bamboo stick and a bamboo frame. The frame is covered with paper panels and has a paper streamer of about 45 cm in length attached to it. The streamer has the name of the deceased written on it. The fun neh is used to invite the soul and it also serves as the soul's temporary residence for the duration of the ceremony.

Various foods and refreshments were also prepared for the ceremony as well as for the guests and the officiating priests. The following items constituted the most important sacrificial food items: One cup of Chinese wine and one cup of tea, various bowls of sweets and fruits, a large oval platter which contained three types of cooked meats: chicken was placed in the centre, with pork positioned to its left and fish to its right. This platter is known in the Hakka dialect as the **some sen** (three offerings).

2.5 THE PURCHASE AND PREPARATION OF CANDLES AND JOSS STICKS

Other ritual paraphernalia included a large painted portrait of the deceased, two thick red candles measuring approximately 75mm in diameter and about 30 cm in length. These red candles were called **lup tzook** (candles). A new porcelain joss stick receptacle called a heong loo was also purchased.

3.0 THE FIRST PART OF THE CEREMONY

3.1 THE CEREMONIAL LOUNGE AS THE VENUE

On the day of the ceremony, the **tongue h'a** (lounge) had a large table arranged in the centre. The paper house was placed on the back end of the table. The large painted portrait of the deceased was prominently displayed in front of the house.

3.2 THE OFFERING TO THE DECEASED

A space in front of the portrait was provided for the heong loo. A candle was placed on either side of the heong loo. Two cups, one containing wine and the other tea, were placed next to each other in front of the loss stick receptacle. Sweets and fruits were next displayed in bowls in a straight row in front of the tea and wine cups. The large platter of cooked some sen meats was placed in the front row.

3.3 THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CEREMONY

The astrologer had divined that the most auspicious time to commence the ceremony was 7 am. A short while before 7 am the officiating priests and the relatives waited on the patio.

3.3.1 The distribution of joss sticks

One of the priests lit a small bundle of joss sticks and handed one to each participant.

3.3.2 Divining for the soul's presence

Prior to the commencement of the main ritual, a cock was brought to the entrance of the house. The Ritualist who acted as the Master of Ceremonies, nicked the neck of the cock and allowed the blood to collect in a small receptacle. Using the cock's beak as a nib, the Ritualist wrote in the cock's blood the name of the deceased on the streamer of the fun neh (vide: 7.2.2.3).

A gold coloured 25 cm image of the Buddha was placed on a table in front of the house prior to the main ceremony. Certain rituals directed at the image were carried out by the main celebrant.

Following the commencement of prayers by the main celebrant, the Ritualist wailed a tearful invitation to the deceased's soul to enter the ancestral home. This invitation was followed by more chanting by the priests. The main celebrant cast the **b'ea** (two divining woods or shells) to see if the soul was present at the ceremony. The shells fell into the affirmative pattern, one facing upwards and therefore representing the Yang element, the other facing downwards, showing the proper balance with the Yin.

3.3.4 The procession enters the home

Being satisfied that the soul was present at the ceremony, the participants then prepared to move into the house itself. In the absence of the deceased's son, the eldest nephew of the deceased carried the heong loo, followed by the deceased's daughter carrying the fun neh.

While the other priests lined the doorway, the main celebrant carried the Buddha image and led the procession into the house. This procession was accompanied by the sounds of the drums and the cymbals of the priests.

3.3.5 The positioning of the heong loo and the fun neh

Once inside, the incense receptacle was positioned in its place and after the customary bow to the portrait of the deceased, each participant placed his or her joss stick into the receptacle. The undistributed joss sticks were placed by the priest into the receptacle. The fun neh was placed in an upright position at the right side of the table. The Buddha image was placed next to the large painting of the deceased. The informant thought that the image was in some way associated with the soul of the deceased. This concluded the first part of the ceremony.

4.0 THE SECOND HALF OF THE CEREMONY

4.1 THE ROBING RITE

4.1.1 The robing of those present

The second part of the ceremony commenced at 10 am with the whole clan assembled in the largest of the four lounges. The robing

rite occurred at this stage. Each mourner had to don the calico white mourning gown, with the exception of the widow and her daughter who wore sack cloth gowns. A similar sack cloth gown was tagged with the name of each of the deceased's daughters and son. In response to their names being read out, the mourners stepped forward one after the other in order to be robed.

4.1.2 The 'robing' of absent family members

Those who were absent, had their gowns placed on a ladder in order to signify that they were 'elevated' and not placed at the low or coffin level. This was to spare them from ritual contamination resulting from association with the dead.

4.2 THE SECOND THROWING OF THE B'EA DIVINING SHELLS

The senior officiating priest at this juncture attempted to divine whether the soul had indeed entered the ancestral home. He did this by again throwing the two divining shells. On this occasion, the shells kept falling in negative patterns.

4.2.1 The restoration of the soul's presence

The interpretation by the informant of this negative result indicated that her late husband's soul was unhappy over an argument which had occurred the previous evening between the nephew and the widow's niece. The argument later also involved the widow. However, after five attempts, the Ritualist solved the problem by inviting over the widow's brother who was elsewhere in the lounge. He was asked to join the widow and her daughter who were both bowing in a respectful attitude, each with a joss stick clasped in their hands while the chanting priest was throwing the b'ea.

Immediately after this favourite brother-in-law of the deceased had joined them, the positive result was obtained and the priests then continued to parade around the table while chanting and reading the prayers.

4.2.2 Priestly prayers and processions

The priests took turns, sometimes alone, at times in a group of two or three, to walk around the table while repeatedly chanting

their prayers to the accompaniment of the gongs and cymbals. The whole procedure stopped for a lunch break after which the priests continued their ritual till supper time at 6 pm.

By supper time, all the clan members had left to continue with their own family activities. The immediate family living in the ancestral home and the special visitors however, stopped for supper, after which the ceremony continued in its final phase until 2 am. This particular ceremony was considered as having lasted for one day and one night.

4.3 BURNING OF PAPER MODELS

The final section of this ceremony was brought to a close with the burning of the paper models in the courtyard. To protect the paving and to forestall any possible fire hazards, a very large Chinese frying pan called a wok, was used. In this case an especially large wok with an estimated diameter of a metre was used.

As each item was committed to the flames, the Ritualist called upon the deceased to enjoy its use. When the paper servants were thrown into the fire, they were admonished by the Ritualist to faithfully serve the deceased. The very last item to be committed to the fire was the fun neh.

The ashes of the paper models were buried in the fields or garden. My informant stressed that the ashes were always disposed of in this manner. It was unheard of to throw the ashes into a dustbin because of the ceremonial origin of it.

4.4 PRIESTLY ABILITY TO DISCERN THE LOCALITY OF THE SOUL

The villagers told the informant that the priests are able to discern at the time of the funeral whether a soul has ascended to heaven, or whether it has **lock kuei tau** (descended into the earth) to become a menacing ghost. A relative of the informant told her that when the widow's father-in-law was buried, the priest had divined that his soul had descended and he indeed pestered his wife at least on one occasion. While trying to sleep one night she saw the outline of a human figure on the linen curtains of her canopied bed. Suddenly she felt a heavy body on top of her. She called his name in anger and threatened

'to leave everything and not care' about his home and presumebly the ancestral sacrifices. Immediately after she had said this, she felt the heavy weight lifting off her body and she was never again bothered by his menacing ghost.

4.5 THE USE OF THE FUN NEH IN DIVINING THE SOUL'S LOCALITY

My informant did not ask the priests about her late husband's final state because she had too much else on her mind at that time.

After the ritual bonfire in which all the paper paraphernalia was transferred to the netherworld, she was told by relatives living in the village that she could have divined from the fun neh whether her husband had ascended to heaven or whether he had become a menacing spirit. When she enquired how this could have been done, she was told that questions could have been put to the fun neh which served as the temporary abode of her husband's soul. The fun neh could have been asked to bend forward once for an affirmative answer or bend twice for a negative answer. In reply to her statement that someone could have manipulated the bamboo stick attached to the fun neh, she was informed that the stick was normally held down by a person and that the whole procedure was subjected to close scrutiny by the participants.

5.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE INFORMANT

5.1 THE LOCUS OF THE SOUL

She also indicated that no name tablet was erected for her husband but that the joss stick receptacle served as the locus for remembering him although joss sticks and special offerings would only be placed in front of it on special celebratory occasions.

After the ceremony the receptacle was placed on one of the sideboard tops in one of the lounges as part of the home's special porcelain ware.

5.1.1 The mobility of the soul

When my informant was asked whether the soul of her husband was confined to his ancestral home, she replied that his soul could

roam about freely. It was up to his soul to decide whether it should visit South Africa or be in China, as long as he had been formally welcomed into his ancestral home.

She was however not certain whether his soul had ascended into heaven or whether it had gone into the earth to be a menacing soul, but she assured the writer that since his death, neither she nor any of her family had had any untoward experiences which may have emanated from him.

5.1.2 The D'hoon Leung ceremony

The practice of the clan is that every two or three years or depending on other factors, a ceremony called 'installing the tablets' in the ancestral hall was observed. The primary purpose of this ceremony was to install all the tablets of those who had died since the previous d'hoon leung ceremony in the ancestral hall.

5.2 THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEAD

5.2.1 On New Year's Day

Once a year the whole clan must pay their respect to all their ancestors in the hall and those at home whose tablets have not yet been installed in the hall. This service of remembrance is usually held on New Year's Day. The Hakka call this service of remembrance 'keen tze kung'. On this day each family will be responsible for the provision of tze pao-mock money, joss sticks, candles, some fire crackers as well as a platter of the three cooked meats of chicken, fish and pork. The provision of a cup of Chinese wine for the deceased is also expected from each family. After the food had been offered to the spirits, each family returns home to enjoy the special meal.

5.2.2 On the occasion of Saau Moo

The other important festival when the dead are especially remembered is known as the **saau moo** (sweeping of the graves). My informant told me that the same offerings are expected to be made to the ancestors as on New Year's Day.

5.2.3 Offerings indicate remembrance not worship

When specifically asked whether her husband's family believed that by offering joss sticks and food, they were in fact worshipping their ancestors and dead relatives, she replied, 'They are not gods but our own people. Why should they be worshipped?' She also indicated that while in years gone by one could speak of paai tze kung, which means, to show obeisance to one's ancestors, many present day Chinese speak only of keen tze kung, which to her means the show of respect or the offering of a memorial sacrifice.

5.2.4 Evidences of manipulative religious practices

She conceded that fortune tellers do advise their clients to appease the souls of the departed in order to obtain either blessings or release from being menaced by the unhappy souls. Such people, in her estimation, are prone to offer worship to the souls of the dead.

CONCLUSION

Mrs F Dateling and her family continue to visit the cemetery each Sunday to place flowers on her late husband's grave. Although she is not a Christian or involved with any church, no ancestor tablet has been established at home. She also does not burn joss sticks, or offer any sacrifices for memorial or veneration reasons. She arranged the observance of the Inviting home of the soul ceremony 'just in case there was something to it'.

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March 1989

Dear Friend,

I am examining the phenomenon of the cult of the ancestors with special reference to the Chinese Protestant community in Johannesburg.

I shall be most grateful for your help if you would be kind enough to complete the attached questionnaire. The information obtained will be used for academic purposes and will be made available to all participating groups and churches upon request.

Please rest assured that complete anonymity will be observed as your name and address will not be required.

Thank you for being prepared to share some of your invaluable knowledge and insights.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Song.
Lecturer: Dept of Oriental Studies.
University of Durban-Westville.

APPENDIX B

THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Who may complete this questionnaire?
   a. Chinese who are 18 years and older who consider themselves as Protestants but who are NOT NECESSARILY members or adherents of any church, group or fellowship.

   b. Chinese who are 18 years and older who are DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY associated with ANY Protestant church, fellowship or group in the Johannesburg area.

2. Your anonymity is assured. Names and other identifiable details are not required.

3. Please mark the appropriate answer boxes with an "X".

---

1. Please supply the following details by marking the appropriate box with an "X".

Your Age:

18-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61 +
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Please indicate your marital status.

married	single	divorced	widowed
1	2	3	4

3. Please indicate your gender.

male	female
1	2

4. Employment and studies.

You are employed as (specify)	1 _____
Unemployed/seeking work	2
Scholar at high school	3
Student at Tertiary institution	4
Employed and studying	5
Household duties (eg housewife)	6
Pensioner/Retired	7
Other (Specify)	8 _____

5. Please name the church/fellowship with which you are associated.

Name of the church/fellowship	1 _____
Not attending any church/fellowship at present	2
Not a practising Christian	3

6. Please indicate your standing in your church/fellowship.

Full member	1
membership applied for	2
adherent	3
visitor	4
other	5
not attending church/fellowship	6
not applicable	7

7. How long have you worshipped with your local church/fellowship?

State period:	1	_____
Not attending any church/fellowship	2	
Not applicable	3	

8. Which position/s do you hold **at present** in your local church or fellowship?

None | 1 |

Positions:_____
_____
_____
_____

Not applicable | 2 |

9. How frequently do you participate in the rite known as Hung Cheng Jeat (Sweeping of the Graves) ?

annually	when possible	don't	n/appl
1	2	3	4

10. How frequently do you participate in the rite known as **Seu Yea** (Burning of clothes)?

annually	when possible	don't	n/appl
1	2	3	4

11. For which reason/s do you participate in the rite known as **Hung Cheng Jeat**? More than one answer is possible.

	yes	no	n/a
	1	2	3
For the sake of tradition			
Loyalty to the clan			
To show respect to the deceased			
To join in the ancestor rites			
Other reason/s			
Do not participate			

12. For which reason/s do you participate in the rite known as **Seu Yea**? (Burning of clothes)

	yes	no	n/a
	1	2	3
For the sake of tradition			
Loyalty to the clan			
To show respect to the deceased			
To join in the ancestor rites			
Other reason/s			
Do not participate			

13. How do you participate in the **Hung Cheng Jeat**?

Only with members of the same clan? 1

With members of other clans? 2

In a "dialect group" such as the Hakka? 3

Do not participate. 4

14. Should prayers for help be directed to the spirits of the deceased?

yes 1 no 2 uncertain 3

15. Do you consider yourself a Christian?

yes 1 no 2 uncertain 3

16. At what age did you become aware of your status as a Christian?

state age ____ 1 uncertain 2 not a Christian 3

17. How often has the subject of Ancestor Worship been dealt with in your congregation?

never 1 seldom 2 occasionally 3

often 4 uncertain 5 not applicable 6

once 7

18. Has **a series of studies** on ancestor worship been conducted for your congregation during the past two years?

yes 1 no 2 uncertain 3

don't know 4 not applicable 5

19. Do you agree that there is a great difference between the **worship of ancestors** and the **veneration of ancestors** (the **show of respect** to ancestors)?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__] don't know [__4__]

20. Which of the two terms do you consider to be more "accurate" as far as the ancestor cult is concerned?

Ancestor worship [__1__] Ancestor veneration [__2__]

21. Does your church or fellowship allow funeral articles to be burnt at the following venues before, during or immediately after the funeral service?

	before 1	during 2	immediately afterwards 3	don't know 4	not applicable 5
funeral parlour					
church					
hall					
graveside					

22. Any other comments on Q21 ?_____

23. Should the burning of funeral articles be allowed at Christian funeral services?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__] don't know [__4__]

24. Must a Christian reject ancestor worship?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__] don't know [__4__]

25. Will non-Christians be excluded from heaven?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__] don't know [__4__]

26. Do you have any views on Q25? _____

27. Were you brought up in a home in which a special place was set aside for the worship or veneration of ancestors.

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__] don't know [__4__]

28. Were you taught how to participate in the rites of ancestor "worship"?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__] don't know [__4__]

29. Who was your main teacher of these rites? Please specify:

parents	[__1__]
grandparents	[__2__]
uncle	[__3__]
aunt	[__4__]
sibling	[__5__]
friend	[__6__]
other	[__7__]
not taught	[__8__]
n/applicable	[__9__]

30. How old were you when you first learnt about the rites?

Age [1] cannot remember age [2] did not learn the rites [3]

31. Do you maintain a special place in your home for the veneration or worship of ancestors?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__]

32. Indicate how often you practise the ancestral worship rites?

never [__1__] seldom [__2__] sometimes [__3__] regularly [__4__]

33. Do you participate in ancestral rites:

in your parents' home	[__1__]
in your in-laws' home	[__2__]
in both homes	[__3__]
do not participate	[__4__]
other venue	[__5__]

34. Please indicate YOUR OWN responses to the following statements:

	agree 1	disagree 2	uncertain 3
A "god-shelf" in a home indicates the practice of "ancestor worship"			
The burning of "grave money" implies that the ancestors are "worshipped"			
The ancestors are able to partake of the food offered to them			
If the ONLY CHILD is a daughter, it will be her duty to keep the spirit tablets of her deceased parents in her home			
Women generally practise the daily ancestral rites at home.			

35. Would you eat food which you knew was first offered to the ancestors?

yes [1] no [2] uncertain [3]

36. If YES to question 35, please give your main reason.

---

37. If NO to question 35, please give your main reason.

---

38. Please furnish YOUR PERSONAL BELIEF on the following statements.

	agree 1	disagree 2	not certain 3	don't know 4
Christian mourners should accept the white and red packets which are traditionally handed out at Chinese funerals.				
The red packets distributed after the funeral counteract the "bad luck" which funerals cause.				
The money from the white and red packets will cause bad luck if taken home.				
The soul of the deceased is led to the spirit tablet when the burning candle-joss stick is taken home after the funeral.				

39. How many souls does a person possess, according to traditional Chinese beliefs?

number of souls [_____][_1_] uncertain [__2__]

40. How many families do you know of have arranged for the soul of a deceased relative to be welcomed back into the ancestral home in the Far East?

number of families [____][_1__] none [__2__]

41. Please pardon the question, but would you like mock money to be burnt for you in the distant future?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] uncertain [__3__] don't know [__4__]

42. Please indicate how you feel about the statements below:

	strongly disagree 1	disagree 2	uncertain 3	agree 4	strongly agree 5
One can respect one's ancestors without having to make offerrings to them.					
The departed spirits will harm their offsprings if offerings are not made.					
Ancestors exercise good and bad influences on their offsprings.					
The spirits of ancestors have no influence over their offsprings.					

43. Please suggest how Christians can show respect to the ancestors?

---

44. Since being involved in a congregation, have you tried to discourage others from practicing the burning of mock money?

yes [__1__] no [__2__] n/applicable [__3__]

45. Since being involved in a congregation, have you ever invited non-Christians to attend church activities with you?

friends yes [__1__] no [__2__] n/applicable [__3__]

relatives yes [__1__] no [__2__] n/applicable [__3__]

46. Apart from attending funerals, for what other reason/s do you visit the cemetery? (More than ONE answer is possible).

	YES	NO	N/A
To tidy the grave of a deceased person	1	2	3
To place flowers on the grave	1	2	3
To pay respects to one's ancestors	1	2	3
To inform one's ancestors of the intentions to go on a long journey	1	2	3
To ask for help and guidance	1	2	3

Other reason/s: Please specify

---

47. Please categorise the following rites:

	religious	non-religious	uncertain	don't know
Burning joss sticks	1	2	3	4
Offering food	1	2	3	4
Hung Cheng Jeat	1	2	3	4
Seu Yea	1	2	3	4
Burning mock money	1	2	3	4

48. How would you rate the cult of the ancestors in terms of Chinese culture?

very important	1
important	2
not important	3
uncertain	4

49. Would you say that:

Culture is part of religion	1
Religion is part of culture	2
Uncertain	3
Don't know	4
Other observation	5

50. Does the practice of ancestral rites (see examples Q 47) in South Africa constitute an ethno-cultural link with China?

yes [1] no [2] uncertain [3] don't know [4]

51. How many families known to you have sent their ancestor tablets for safekeeping to an overseas temple?

number of families [1] none [2]

52. If your answer was in the affirmative to Q 51, please state where the tablet/s was/were sent to for safekeeping.

Mauritius [1] H.Kong [2] Taiwan [3]

Mainland [4] Elsewhere [5] please state:_____

not applicable [6]

THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED FOR YOUR KIND ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

APPENDIX C

JOHANNESBURG RANDOM SAMPLE: ANCESTOR VENERATION MARCH 1989

Dear Friend,

This brief questionnaire is to help establish certain facts about ancestor veneration in the Johannesburg Chinese community. The information is to be used for academic purposes only.

No personal details whatsoever are required.

With my grateful thanks for your willingness to help me obtain this information.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Song
Lecturer, Dept. of Oriental Studies
University of Durban-Westville.

QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTION:
PLEASE MARK WITH AN "X" THE APPROPRIATE ANSWERS.

1. How often does your family burn joss sticks at home?

   on special occasions [1] occasionally [2]
   everyday [3] never [4] don't know [5]
   uncertain [6]

2. How often does your family offer special food to the ancestors at home?

   on special occasions [1] occasionally [2]
   everyday [3] never [4] don't know [5]
   uncertain [6]